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THE UNKNOWN GENERALS -- GERMAN CORPS COMMANDERS IN WORLD WAR II

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army  
Command and General Staff College in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

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by

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B.S., United States Military Academy, 1974

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This study is an historical analysis of the background and demonstrated leadership attributes of 332 World War II German corps commanders on the Eastern, Italian, and Western Fronts. Overall characteristics are determined based on each officer's experience and performance based on available historical records. These records focus on age, nobility, background, education, branch, previous command and staff positions, membership in the General Staff, demonstrated military achievement, promotion, and subsequent higher command.

Among the many conclusions which could be drawn from this investigation are: most successful corps commanders possessed an excellent educational background, performed well in previous significant command and staff positions, and demonstrated the capability for independent action; and, political factors played a minor role in the selection of officers for corps command.

The study concludes that the Eastern, Western, and Italian Fronts all had competent German corps commanders conducting operations; no Front had a preponderance of successful commander's to the detriment of the other two.

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

## ABSTRACT

THE UNKNOWN GENERALS - GERMAN CORPS COMMANDERS IN WORLD WAR II: A Leadership Analysis of German Army Corps Commanders by Major French L. MacLean, USA, 169 pages.

This study is an historical analysis of the background and demonstrated leadership attributes of 332 World War II German corps commanders on the Eastern, Italian, and Western Fronts. Overall characteristics are determined based on each officer's experience and performance based on available historical records. These records focus on age, nobility, background, education, branch, previous command and staff positions, membership in the General Staff, demonstrated military achievement, promotion, and subsequent higher command.

Among the many conclusions which could be drawn from this investigation are: most successful corps commanders possessed an excellent educational background, performed well in previous significant command and staff positions, and demonstrated the capability for independent action; and, political factors played a minor role in the selection of officers for corps command.

The study concludes that the Eastern, Western, and Italian Fronts all had competent German corps commanders conducting operations; no Front had a preponderance of successful commander's to the detriment of the other two. (KR)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
Chapter 1 - Defining the Problem	1
Chapter 2 - Review of Literature	10
Chapter 3 - The German Corps System	26
Chapter 4 - Background, Education, and Experience	38
Chapter 5 - Performance, Promotion, and Potential	73
Chapter 6 - Overall Characteristics	103
Appendix A - Abbreviations	118
Appendix B - List of Commanders	123
Bibliography	164

# LIST OF TABLES

Table	Title	Page
Table 1	Army Strength	3
Table 2	Corps Headquarters Strength	26
Table 3	Parent Army Headquarters	29
Table 4	Corps Assigned to Army Headquarters	30
Table 5	Divisions Assigned to Corps	32
Table 6	General Officer Grades	38
Table 7	Age of Commanders	40
Table 8	Newly Promoted Majors	43
Table 9	Newly Promoted Lieutenant-Colonels	44
Table 10	Newly Promoted Colonels	44
Table 11	Commanders of Noble Descent	46
Table 12	Commander's Background	47
Table 13	Corps Commanders with Police Backgrounds	49
Table 14	Panzer Corps Commanders with Police Backgrounds	51
Table 15	Austrian Army and Army Group Commanders	52
Table 16	Newly Promoted Generalmajor	53
Table 17	Newly Promoted Generalleutnant	54
Table 18	Newly Promoted General der Infanterie, etc.	54
Table 19	Branch Affiliation	56



Table 20	Commanders from the General Staff	58
Table 21	Prior Division Command Experience	61
Table 22	Corps Commanders Coming Out of Retirement	67
Table 23	Corps Commanders from the Police	68
Table 24	Panzer Corps Commanders from Panzer Divisions	70
Table 25	Army Recipients of the Knight's Cross	77
Table 26	Highest Decorations Received by the Corps Commanders	78
Table 27	Knight's Cross with Oakleaves and Swords for Corps Command	79
Table 28	General Officers in Service	83
Table 29	Corps Commanders Promoted to Generalfeldmarschall	84
Table 30	German Dead 1939-1944	89
Table 31	General Officer Fatalities by Grade	89
Table 32	General Officer Fatalities by Cause	90
Table 33	Corps Commander Fatalities	90
Table 34	National Committee for a Free Germany	93
Table 35	Generaloberst	99
Table 36	Generalleutnant	100
Table 37	Army Group Commanders	100
Table 38	Corps Commander Baseline Characteristics	106
Table 39	Corps Commanders by Front Comparison	108

## CHAPTER 1

### DEFINING THE PROBLEM

#### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to examine the background and proficiency of German corps commanders in World War II. It is evident that these men, the links between operational and tactical levels, were key components in the resulting successes and failures of the Wehrmacht. Present United States AirLand Battle doctrine draws extensively on the German experience in this conflict.

Current examination of German generalship in World War II suffers from two deficiencies: identification and generalization. Although most high level commanders (army and above) have been identified and their proficiency analyzed, such is not the case with the commanders of the ninety-three German corps.

Research at both the German Army Military Archives at Freiburg, West Germany, and at Fort Leavenworth, reveals that no single complete listing of corps commanders exists. However, by combining sources found at both places, a comprehensive list can be documented identifying these corps commanders.

The second major deficiency concerns generalization of leaders. Current literature too often categorizes German general officers as stiff Prussian aristocrats with almost superhuman military expertise. Naturally, they varied in background, proficiency, and potential. With the identification of the commanders completed, one can conduct an examination of individual careers. This is especially critical for further investigation of the German military tenets on which so much of U.S. doctrine is based.

This study will focus on the background, previous command and staff experience, demonstrated military achievement, and subsequent promotion to higher command to identify prominent characteristics of these individuals. The analysis will conclude by comparing corps commanders on the Eastern Front with those on the Western Front.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The German Army in World War II was an extremely large, multifaceted organization which conducted operations on two continents. Personnel strength numbered in the millions. The Army was divided into two major sub-organizations, the Field Army and the Replacement Army. Personnel figures through the war for both are shown below.<sup>1</sup>

Table 1  
Army Strength  
(in millions)

	June 1940	June 1941	June 1942	June 1943	June 1944	December 1944
Field Army	3.7	3.8	4.1	4.5	4.0	3.8
Replacement Army	.9	1.2	1.9	1.8	2.3	2.6
TOTAL	4.8	5.0	6.0	6.3	6.3	6.4

To control this large force, the Germans developed several echelons of command. The highest field command was the army group. Eighteen army groups were created during the war with the mission to control two to four armies in a single theater of operations for a single campaign. A field marshal most frequently commanded an army group.<sup>2</sup>

Immediately subordinate to the army groups were the armies. An army was a more permanent command and was not formed for just a specific campaign. Twenty-seven armies were established between 1939 and 1945. Each army theoretically directed two to six corps. An army was commanded by a field marshal, a colonel general, or a general of infantry, panzer, artillery, etc.<sup>3</sup>

The ninety-three corps and their commanders are the major subject of this thesis. They will be discussed in detail in chapters three, four, and five. Each corps directed the activities of from two to six divisions and was commanded by a general of infantry, panzer, etc., a lieutenant general, or a major general.

The lowest general officer commands were the divisions. Within the Army, the number of divisions peaked in June 1944 at 283. In addition, both the Waffen SS and Luftwaffe provided ground divisions for combat.<sup>4</sup>

More than 2400 personnel served as general officers in the German Army. David Downing, author of The Devil's Virtuosos, states that "The German generals were the finest thinking and fighting soldiers of modern history."<sup>5</sup> The level of competence of corps and division commanders was high. However, there was a wide variance in prospects for advancement. Some officers had potential for promotion to higher commands, some lost favor personally or politically, and some were not viewed as professionally competent for future major operational responsibility.<sup>6</sup> It is the purpose of this study to examine these factors of capability.

#### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The major research questions this study will focus on are:(1) What were the prominent background, experience, and achievement characteristics exhibited by German corps commanders in World War II? and (2) Given these characteristics as a whole, were the German corps commanders faced by the British and Americans on the Western/Italian Fronts less or more proficient than those fighting the Soviets on the Eastern Front?

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The compilation of a definitive list of corps commanders should add to the body of information concerning German leadership in World War II. Conclusions concerning background, education, command and staff experience, and demonstrated military achievement may assist our own efforts at senior leader development.

## METHODOLOGY

The methodology used for this study is three-fold. First, prominent characteristics for German general officers will be identified from post-war published sources. Second, each commander will be analyzed according to background, education, previous command and staff experience, demonstrated military achievement, and subsequent promotions. With these baselines established, the corps commanders on the Eastern Front will then be compared and contrasted with those on the Italian and Western Fronts.

CHAPTER 1 is a definition of the problem central to the thesis. The historical background of the study is presented as well as the methodology to be followed.

CHAPTER 2 presents a detailed review of literature. Sources essential to the study to be discussed include manuscripts of the U.S. Foreign Military Studies of the Historical Division, United States Army Europe (USAREUR); captured German records microfilmed at Alexandria, Virginia; German records at the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv, Freiburg, West Germany; and postwar German, British, and American literature.

CHAPTER 3 provides a background study of the German corps system. This chapter will assist in putting later personnel issues in perspective.

CHAPTER 4 is an in-depth presentation of prominent factors of background, education, and previous command and staff experience.

CHAPTER 5 presents factors of demonstrated military achievement, promotion, and subsequent higher level command.



CHAPTER 6 establishes baseline characteristics determined by criteria presented in chapters 4 and 5. Overall traits for all corps commanders are presented, and a final comparison and contrast of commanders on the Eastern Front with those on the Italian and Western Fronts is made. Conclusions are based on the evaluated information.

ANNEX A explains abbreviations used throughout the study and presents a concise list of German terms and definitions to assist future researchers with the many untranslated sources.

ANNEX B is a comprehensive listing of all German Army corps commanders.

ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> W. Victor Madej, German Army Order of Battle 1939-1945, (Allentown, Pennsylvania: Game Marketing Company), 1981, Vol 1, p.4.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.37.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.38.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>5</sup> David Downing, The Devil's Virtuosos: German Generals at War 1940-45, (New York: St. Martin's Press), 1977, p.228.

<sup>6</sup> Telford Taylor, The March of Conquest: The German Victories in Western Europe, 1940, (New York: Simon and Schuster), 1958, p.20.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose for presenting a detailed review of literature for this thesis is two-fold. First, it will familiarize the reader with the wide variety of both English and German material available. Second, it provides succeeding researchers with a synopsis of the information relating to the German corps and corps commanders in World War II.

The review of literature for this thesis consists of books, manuscripts of the U.S. Foreign Military Studies of the Historical Division USAREUR., and captured German records microfilmed at Alexandria, Virginia. The research process entails examination, analyzation, contrast, and comparison of the information from these sources.

Material originated from many locations. The German Army Archives at the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv, Freiburg, FRG was the primary source for documenting the list of corps and corps commanders. The Combined Research Library (CARL) at the United

States Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC), Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, provided the foundation for documenting the remainder of the thesis.

The research material used in this thesis was unclassified. The sources range from those written during World War II to the present. Pre-1945 material consists of primary sources with little author interpretation. Sources written immediately after 1945 include interviews with senior German commanders. Recent literature includes memoirs and recently opened archive files.

The review of literature applicable to this thesis is divided into two sections. Part I concentrates on information about the corps and corps commanders. Part II focuses on those prominent leadership characteristics emphasized by the Germans, the promotion and awards systems, and the General Staff. For nontranslated German works I have provided an English translation of the title in parentheses. Other literature is included in the bibliography. The following sources were the most useful.

## PART I

### BOOKS

John Angolia's work On the Field of Honor, A History of the Knight's Cross Bearers (Volume 1-2) is an excellent source of information on German military personalities in World War II. These two works provide short biographies of the winners of Germany's highest military awards, including many corps commanders. The two books are the first of a planned seven volume series. General career information is excellent, although not all dates of assignment are accurate.

R. James Bender and Warren W. Odegard are the authors of Uniforms, Organization and History of the Panzertruppe. This work provides a wealth of information related to German panzer units, equipment, and uniforms. The section concerning personalities provides lists of commanders of panzer armies, corps, and divisions with only a few discrepancies.

Dermot Bradley and Richard Schulze-Kossens are the editors of the Taetigkeitsbericht des Chefs des Heerespersonalamtes General der Infanterie Rudolf Schmundt: 1.10.42-29.10.44. (Daily Reports of the Chief of the Army Personnel Office General of Infantry Rudolf Schmundt: October 1, 1942 to October 29, 1944) This massive work contains all of the daily communications from the Army Personnel

Office. Promotions and demotions are covered along with valuable information on reliefs of commanders, details of killed in action reports, and the involvement of officers in the 20 July 1944 plot against Hitler.

Hitler's Generals by Richard Brett-Smith is an excellent work on many of Germany's military leaders. The author presents eighty-two short biographies of general officers, more than any other contemporary works. He categorizes these individuals by branch, loyalty to Hitler, and other informative chapters.

David Downing's work The Devil's Virtuosos: German Generals at War 1940-5 is an examination of several European campaigns from the viewpoints of the German generals in command. It summarizes the impact of a few of the more notable German commanders but omits the campaigns in Poland, Scandinavia, North Africa, Italy and the Balkans. The book is good for a quick overview but not for serious depth.

Die Traeger des Ritterkreuzes des Eisernen Kreuzes 1939-1945 (The Wearers of the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross) by Walter-Peer Fellgiebel is an comprehensive listing of all winners of this award. The book organizes this task alphabetically and presents the name, unit, and date of each awardee. No analysis is given as to total numbers by rank, branch, etc.

Hermann Geyer author of Das IX Armeekorps im Ostfeldzug 1941 (The IX Corps in the Eastfront Campaign 1941) has presented an excellent account of a German corps in action. Geyer served as commander of this unit from 1939 to 1942. He committed suicide in 1946 and this book was saved and published by a former staff officer. Most post-war literature concerning units has been written on a division level; this is a good insight into a difficult campaign for a veteran unit.

One of the primary quick reference works at the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv is Wolf Keilig's three volume Das Deutsche Heer 1939-1945 (The German Army 1933-1945). First published in 1956, it presents a wealth of factual data on army organizations, campaigns, and personalities. Most information is presented in chart and table format. Long out of print, it has not been translated to English and is difficult to locate in the United States. In 1983 the author published Die General des Heeres (The Generals of the Army). This work, essentially a reprint of the third volume of the above, contains very short biographies of the 2600 German generals in the Army. These are good overviews with only a few omissions concerning awards stemming from incomplete German records in 1956. This work provides the foundation for the biographical information of the thesis. Keilig's third work Rangliste des Deutschen Heeres 1944/45 (The German Army 1944/45 Rank List) presents the date of rank for all majors and above as of May 1, 1944. In addition, it lists the

last peactime unit of assignment for each individual. All three works should be purchased by CARL to facilitate further detailed research.

Erwin Lenfeld and Franz Thomas have compiled an excellent guide to the winners of Germany's highest military decorations in their Die Eichenlaubtraeger 1940-1945 (The Oakleaves Bearers 1940-1945). This work devotes an entire page to the military career of each of Germany's 882 winners of the Knight's Cross with Oakleaves. Dates of assignment to units are accurate and very complete. It has not been translated yet to English.

An excellent guide to German mountain units is Alpine Elite - German Mountain Troops of World War II by James Lucas. The book centers on several descriptive narratives of mountain unit engagements but also provides background on organizations and personalities. This work provided most of the information on mountain corps used in the thesis.

F.W. von Mellenthin presents an inside view of fourteen prominent commanders in German Generals of World War II: As I Saw Them. The author, a General Staff officer, served as a chief of staff at corps, army, and army group level. Von Mellenthin campaigned with many of these commanders in Africa, Russia, and France. The biographies he presents are clear, factual, and provide an excellent insight into the careers of several commanders.



Klaus Christian Richter is the author of Die Geschichte der deutschen Kavallerie, 1919-1945, (The History of the German Cavalry 1919-1945). This work is a comprehensive study of the organization, training, personalities, and operations of cavalry units in both the Weimar Reichswehr and the Third Reich Wehrmacht. For this study it provided most of the information on the cavalry and Cossack corps of the Army. It has not been translated, but remains an excellent work on German cavalry during the war.

Sylvester Stadler presents an excellent account of the II Waffen SS Panzer Corps at Kursk in his Die Offensive gegen Kursk 1943 (The Offensive against Kursk 1943). Most beneficial to this thesis was the information on corps combat support attachments, a subject often overlooked in other orders of battle. Other excellent features of this work include detailed hourly division reports and summaries of German and Soviet combat losses. Machine produced situation maps are excellent; however, photograph reproductions of original German unit maps are not.

Heereseinteilung 1939 (Army Classification 1939) by Friedrich Stahl is the German order of battle effective January 3, 1939. Units down to battalion level are listed with home stations and commanders. This guide is useful in locating personnel prior to the start of World War II.

Georg Tessin, in his thirteen volume work, Verbaende und Truppen der deutschen Wehrmacht und Waffen-SS im Zweiten Weltkrieg 1939-1945 (Formations and Units of the German Armed Forces and Waffen-SS in the Second World War 1939-1945), describes in great detail the organization and campaigns of all German ground troops during the war. This work is another mainstay of the German Army Archives with no detail spared concerning employment. By month subordinate unit listings are provided for each army and corps, while units organic to division are also extensively covered. Units are grouped according to numerical designation into categories of army, corps, military district, infantry, mobile troops, artillery, engineers, signal, supply, security, naval ground, air force ground, Waffen-SS, and allied. These volumes are invaluable in the study of the organization of the German Army in World War II. Although currently an expensive acquisition, these volumes should be purchased by CARL to assist future research.

Heer- und Flottenfuehrer der Welt (Army and Navy Leaders of the World) by Georg Zikovic presents a comprehensive list of European, Japanese, and American army and navy commanders from the early 1800s to the 1970s. Within the scope of this thesis, Zikovic lists most permanent corps commanders but none of the acting or temporary commanders.

## GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

"Generals of the Third Reich" by retired General Bernhard von Claer is one of an extensive series of the U.S. Army Historical Division post-war studies. These works were commissioned by the Army as after action reports written by former German high ranking officers. This article gives statistical data on the general officers, providing extremely useful information on general officer casualties. Von Claer served with many rear area commands during the war.

"Biographical Sketch of High Ranking German and Russian Officers of the Second World War", Intelligence Research Project 2346 produced in 1946 at Fort Leavenworth, provides excellent page-long biographies of 52 German and 21 Russian officers. German biographies present excellent detail of the pre-1939 careers of these individuals.

Order of Battle of the German Army October 1942, April 1943, February 1944, and March 1945 are four War Department Military Intelligence Division documents describing the perceived organization of the German Army. Only incomplete listings of commanders and staffs are listed, but the works provide excellent information on wartime organization.

BUNDESARCHIV-MILITAERARCHIV DOCUMENTS

Several German Army Archive documents provided important information on dates of rank and assignments and are listed below along:

Dienstaltersliste A zur Stellenbesetzung vom 12. Oktober 1937, (Service Officer Date of Rank List as of October 12, 1937) (National Archives Microcopy No. 78, Roll No. 512). This work, as well as those shown below, lists seniority by date of rank.

Dienstaltersliste A zur Stellenbesetzung des Heeres 1938, (Service Officer Date of Rank List as of 1938) (National Archives Microcopy No. 78, Roll No. 512).

Dienstaltersliste A zur Stellenbesetzung des Heeres 1. May 1940, (Service Officer Date of Rank List as of May 1, 1940) (National Archives Microcopy No. 78, Roll No. 513).

Dienstaltersliste A zur Stellenbesetzung des Heeres 1. May 1941, (Service Officer Date of Rank List as of May 1, 1941) (National Archives Microcopy No. 78, Roll No. 514).

Dienstaltersliste A zur Stellenbesetzung des Heeres 1. May 1942, (Service Officer Date of Rank List as of May 1, 1942) (National Archives Microcopy No. 78, Roll No. 514).

Dienstaltersliste I zur Stellenbesetzung des Heeres 1. May 1943, (Service Officer Date of Rank List as of May 1, 1943) (National Archives Microcopy No. 78, Roll No. 515).

Stellenbesetzung des Heeres 1938, (Officer Positions in the Army 1938) (National Archives Microcopy No. 78, Roll No. 512). This work lists all officer command positions to include company commanders.

Stellenbesetzung von Staeben, HPA, Agr. P3 (Staff Officer Positions in the Army) (National Archives Microcopy No. 78, Roll No. 55). This card file lists division and higher staff positions concentrating on 1944-1945.

## PART II

### BOOKS

John R. Angolia, in his book For Fuehrer and Fatherland; Military Awards of the Third Reich, describes the German awards and decorations system 1933-1945. For this study, the section concerning the various grades of the award of the Knight's Cross is most beneficial. The author is widely considered to be one of the leading authorities in this field.

The Eastern Front, 1941-45, German Troops and the Barbarisation of Warfare by Omer Bartov, presents an analysis of social and political factors in three divisions on the Eastern Front. The author provides valuable background material concerning the extent of nobility in the German Army.

Matthew Cooper's The German Army 1933-1945 is one of the standard works on the overall picture of German Army operations. Cooper presents many novel conclusions concerning the "Blitzkrieg", the role of Hitler, and the strategic development of the Army. It is an excellent general history.

One of the more unusual but informative works is Fighting Power, German Military Performance, 1914-1945 by Martin van Creveld. The author presents in detail the contrasting organizational and leadership aspects of German and American forces during this period. For this thesis he provides extensive information on doctrine, promotions, decorations, casualties, and other leader related subjects. His premise is that the German system produced units with greater fighting power than like American ones.

T.N. Dupuy is the author of two works on the General Staff: A Genius for War: The German Army and General Staff, 1807-1945 and The German General Staff, Institution of Demonstrated Excellence for National Command, Planning, Coordination, and Combat Performance. Dupuy discusses the origins and mission of the General Staff, its historical development and its stormy relationship with Hitler.

Der deutsche Generalstabsoffizier (The German General Staff Officer) by Hansgeorg Model addresses the selection and training of the General Staff in the Reichswehr, Wehrmacht and Bundeswehr. Especially valuable are several appendices listing all General Staff officers in 1939 and 1944.

Telford Taylor, in his book The March of Conquest: The German Victories in Western Europe, 1940, describes the 1940 Campaign in France. He addresses organization, retired officers recalled to active duty, and the competence of the generals. This is one of the better works concerning the early war years of the Army.

Bodo Scheurig tackles the delicate subject of German prisoner of war officer collaboration with Soviet forces in his Free Germany, The National Committee and the League of German Officers. Post war literature on this subject is extremely limited. The author provides an excellent discussion of the subject to include a listing of the senior officers involved and their scope of participation. Several were previous corps commanders.

## GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

Guenther Blumentritt, the former Chief of Staff for Army Group D and Commander of the 25th Army, compiled "The German Armies of 1914 and 1939" for the U.S. Army Historical Division. He compares and contrasts the two German Armies in this work. Most helpful are his views on retired officers recalled to active duty and officers laterally transferred from the German police to the army in the mid 1930s.

Another Historical Division study is "Comments on P-041a - P041hh" by Heinz Guderian and Kurt Zeitzler. Guderian served as Commander 2nd Panzer Army, Inspector General Panzer Troops, and Chief of Staff of the Army, while Zeitzler also served as Chief of Staff of the Army after a tour as Chief of Staff Army Group D. In this work they comment on the Army promotion system.

The Guides to German Records Microfilmed at Alexandria, Virginia. Nos 46, 55, 58, 59, 60, 61, and 62 provide summaries of captured German war documents microfilmed at the National Archives. These particular guides cover German corps units. It has summaries of the material photographed, a quick listing of campaigns, and some commanders. The rolls of microfilm include operations reports, logistics summaries, personnel lists, and enemy order of battle information. The guides are in English, the microfilms in German. Not all unit records were captured, but those that were are the



single most important primary sources available in this country. CARL owns a small percentage of the microfilm, but the National Archives is reluctant to lend copies of their own microfilm on inter-library loan.

German officer efficiency reports are discussed by Rudolf Hofmann in "German Efficiency Report System" another Historical Division study. The author presents the history of the reporting system, its importance to promotions, modifications to the system during the war, and the impact of awards and decorations on promotions. Hofmann was the Chief of Staff to the 9th Army, 15th Army and Army Group H.

"The Army Personnel Office" by Helmut Kleikamp provided the Historical Division with an in-depth look at officer performance, the selection system, command training courses, and Nazi Party influence. The author served in the Army Personnel Office for two years before assuming command of the 36th Infantry Division in the closing months of the war.

Hasso von Manteuffel presented another detailed manuscript to the U.S. Army with "Fast, Mobile and Armored Troops". He describes the opposing branch views toward the creation of the panzer branch, special attributes of armored commanders, and the influence Guderian had on all matters concerning armored troops. Von Manteuffel commanded the 5th Panzer Army and the 3rd Panzer Army.

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

The literature reviewed in this chapter was essential to the research of this thesis. More literature was used to corroborate corps command assignments and is referenced in the bibliography. With the survey complete it is beneficial to review the German corps system of World War II.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE GERMAN CORPS SYSTEM

The German corps system served as a flexible command and control headquarters for combat divisions in all theaters of the war. The corps headquarters itself was a tactical and operational headquarters only, unlike the headquarters at division and army<sup>1</sup> which included logistic and administration functions.

Personnel staffing was limited but effective. The following personnel strength was typical of most full strength corps headquarters:<sup>2</sup>

Table 2  
Corps Headquarters Strength

	Officers	Civil Servants	Enlisted	Total
Corps Staff	27	11	157	195
Mapping Department	0	0	16	16
Military Police	2	0	31	33
Artillery Staff	6	0	16	22
Headquarters Troops	31	3	704	738
Total	66	14	924	1004

During the course of the war the German Army fielded eight different types of corps: infantry, panzer, mountain, reserve infantry, reserve panzer, artillery, corps headquarters for special employment, and cavalry/cossack corps. While all but three were designated by Roman numerals, each had a somewhat different organization and function.

Infantry corps (Armeekorps) formed the backbone of the army. Each corps normally had two or three infantry divisions but the command structure was flexible with respect to divisions assigned<sup>3</sup> and to parent army assignment based on operational requirements.

Panzer corps (Panzerkorps) normally were in command of a group of divisions in which panzer or panzer-grenadier divisions played a primary role. During the course of the war there were<sup>4</sup> eighteen panzer corps.

Eight mountain corps (Gebirgskorps) were raised from 1940-1945. Specialized to fight in mountainous and rough terrain, two fought in Norway, three in the Balkans, one rotated between both,<sup>5</sup> one campaigned in Italy, and one fought in southern Russia. When forced to fight in non-mountain terrain, a mountain corps would often assume control of one or two additional infantry divisions due to the organizational shortage of<sup>6</sup> infantry in the two regiment mountain divisions normally assigned.

Initially raised in September 1942, reserve infantry (Reservekorps) and reserve panzer corps (Reserve-Panzerkorps) served as controlling headquarters for the reserve divisions of the Replacement Army. In addition to replacement and training functions, they provided security duty in Poland, the Ukraine, and France. Many were redesignated as actual infantry and panzer corps as the war continued.<sup>7</sup>

In the fall of 1944 several artillery units named People's Artillery Corps (Volks-Artillerie Korps) were formed. However, these were actually only reinforced brigades with five or six battalions of artillery of varying caliber. For this study, the commanders of these units, lieutenant colonels and colonels, will not be analyzed.<sup>8</sup>

Corps headquarters for special employment (Generalkommando z.b.V) were created for operations in secure or quiet fronts and for special purpose missions such as V-weapon sites.<sup>9</sup> These units often did not have the attached heavy artillery or anti-aircraft units often found in front line organizations. As with reserve corps, many were upgraded to frontline status as operations required.<sup>10</sup>

Late in the war the German High Command created one cavalry corps (Kavalleriekorps) and one Cossack cavalry corps (Kosaken-Kavallerie-Korps). The cavalry corps controlled a mixture of infantry, panzer, and Waffen SS divisions, while the Cossack corps contained both Cossack cavalry divisions of Russian volunteers.<sup>11</sup>

The first of the named army corps was the German Africa Corps (Deutsches Afrikakorps), formed February 19, 1941 from German expeditionary forces under Rommel. Although the overall command was upgraded from corps to panzer group in August 1941, the smaller Africa Corps remained in the order of battle until the surrender of German forces in Africa, May 1943.<sup>12</sup>

In the Fall of 1944 the final two named corps were established, Panzer Corps Grossdeutschland (Panzerkorps Grossdeutschland) and Panzer Corps Feldherrnhalle (Panzerkorps Feldherrnhalle).<sup>13</sup> Both fought on the Eastern Front.

Corps were frequently switched from control of one army to another. Subordination to army headquarters for several sample types of corps are shown below:<sup>14</sup>

Table 3  
Parent Army Headquarters  
(Assigned at Date)

Corps	Type	June 40	June 41	May 42	July 43	June 44
I	Infantry	4th	18th	18th	18th	16th
III	Panzer	12th	6th	1st PZ	AA Kempf	1st PZ
VI	Infantry	2nd	9th	9th	3rd PZ	4th
XVII	Infantry	12th	6th	6th	6th	8th

# Parent Army Headquarters (continued)

(Assigned at Date)

Corps	Type	June 40	June 41	May 42	July 43	June 44
XXXV	Special	-	4th	2nd PZ	2nd PZ	9th
XXXIX	Panzer	12th	3rd PZ	16th	4th	4th
XXXXIX	Mountain	-	17th	1st PZ	17th	-
LXIX	Reserve	-	-	-	2nd PZ	2nd PZ

## Legend:

4th: 4th Army

1st PZ: 1st Panzer Army

- : Corps not formed

AA: Army Detachment

The distribution of corps per army headquarters is shown in the following table of the existing army headquarters and the total number of corps assigned to each by date:

Table 4

Number of Corps Assigned to Army Headquarters

(by date shown)

Army	9.9.39	9.6.40	5.6.41	11.5.42	7.7.43	12.6.44	26.12.44
#							
1st	2	5	2	1	2	2	3
1st PZ	-	-	-	2	4	5	2
2nd	-	3	3	2	2	3	3
2nd Pz	-	-	2	3	3	3	3
3rd	2	-	-	-	-	-	-

# Number of Corps Assigned to Army Headquarters

(by date shown)

Army #	9.9.39	9.6.40	5.6.41	11.5.42	7.7.43	12.6.44	26.12.44
3rd PZ	-	-	2	3	3	3	4
4th	3	4	7	3	5	3	5
4th PZ	-	-	2	0	2	3	3
5th	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
5th PZ	-	-	-	-	0	0	2
6th	-	4	6	4	3	4	3
6th PZ	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
7th	1	2	3	2	3	4	6
8th	2	-	-	-	3	2	1
9th	-	3	4	4	5	3	2
10th	5	-	-	-	-	2	3
11th	-	-	3	3	-	-	-
12th	-	7	3	0	-	-	-
14th	3	-	-	-	-	1	1
15th	-	-	4	3	3	5	2
16th	-	3	4	3	3	4	4
17th	-	-	3	3	3	0	1
18th	-	0	3	5	5	2	2
19th	-	-	-	-	-	1	3
20th MTN	-	-	-	2	3	3	4
21st	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
25th	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Total	20	31	51	43	52	53	60

## Legend:

- : Army not formed

0 : Army formed but no corps assigned

These totals are further modified when adding corps in transit from one army area to another and corps directly subordinated to army group level. The total corps assigned to army headquarters in June 1944 was thus further increased to seventy-three with these additional categories. Total corps strength peaked<sup>16</sup> in January 1945 at seventy-seven.



Just as the number of corps varied per army, so did the number of divisions assigned to each corps. The following table<sup>17</sup> presents a sample of this using the corps shown previously:

Table 5  
Number of Assigned Divisions per Corps  
(Infantry Divisions / Panzer or other type Divisions)

Corps #	Type of Corps	June 40	June 41	May 42	July 43	June 44
I	Infantry	3/0	5/0	6/1SS	1/1L	2/0
III	Panzer	3/0	0/0	0/3	1/3	1/4
VI	Infantry	4/0	2/0	3/0	3/0	1/1
XVII	Infantry	2/0	5/0	2/0	3/0	2/0
XXXV	Special	-	1/0	3/0	4/0	5/0
XXXVI	Mountain	2/0	2/0	2/0	2/0	2/0
XXXIX	Panzer	1/2	2/3	1/1	3/0	4/0
XXXXIX	Mountain	-	6/0	2/0	3/1R	-
LXIX	Reserve	-	-	-	2/0	1/1C

Legend:

- 1/0: One infantry, no panzer divisions assigned
- 6/1SS: Six infantry, one Waffen SS divisions assigned
- 1/1L: One infantry, one Luftwaffe field divisions assigned
- 3/1R: Three infantry, one Rumanian divisions assigned
- 1/1C: One infantry, one Cossack division assigned
- : Corps not formed

In addition to assigning divisions, the High Command could weight combat power to individual corps by attachment of specialized units. One of the best examples of this technique occurred during the Kursk offensive within the 4th Panzer Army and Army Detachment Kempf. The breakdown of specialized units for two corps was as follows:

### III Panzer Corps

Rocket Projector Regiment 54	Flak Regiment 99
Heavy Tank Battalion 503	Flak Regiment 153
Engineer Regiment 674	Assault Gun Battalion 228
Engineer Regiment 601	2nd Bn., Artillery Regiment 71
Engineer Battalion 70	Heavy Artillery Battalion 857
Engineer Battalion 127	2nd Bn., Artillery Regiment 62
Engineer Bridge Battalion 531	

### XXXXII Corps

Heavy Anti-Tank Battalion 560	Flak Regiment 77
Heavy Anti-Tank Battalion C	Light Observation Battalion 13
Mountain Engineer Regiment 620	Construction Regiment 26
2nd Bty., Heavy Artillery Bn 800	Construction Battalion 219
Construction Battalion 112	Construction Battalion 153

In summary the German corps system was an efficient, flexible tactical command headquarters which effectively linked the fighting divisions to the field armies. The corps reflected the combined arms doctrine by both the assignment of divisions and by attachment of combat support assets. The variety of corps types facilitated the wide range of missions the German Army was required to perform in differing terrain and climatic conditions. Finally, the system was extremely flexible to rapidly permit both lower and higher reorganization.

With this understanding of the scope of the corps system, this study can now begin to analyze the characteristics of the commanders of these significant units.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Martin van Creveld, Fighting Power, German Military Performance, 1914-1945. (Potomac, Maryland: C&L Defense Consultants), 1980, p.56.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.58.

<sup>3</sup> Telford Taylor, The March of Conquest: The German Victories in Western Europe, 1940. (New York: Simon and Schuster), 1958, p.18.

<sup>4</sup> R. James Bender and Warren W. Odegard, Uniforms, Organization and History of the Panzertruppe. (San Jose: R. James Bender), 1980, p.60.

<sup>5</sup> James Lucas, Alpine Elite - German Mountain Troops of World War II. (London: Jane's), 1980. p.186.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p.89.

<sup>7</sup> Georg Tessin, Verbaende und Truppen der deutschen Wehrmacht und Waffen SS im Zweiten Weltkrieg 1939-1945. (Osnabrueck, FRG.: Biblio Verlag), 1979, Vol 1, p.16.

<sup>8</sup> Wolf Keilig, Das Deutsche Heer 1939-1945. (Bad Nauheim, FRG.: Podzun Verlag), 1956, Vol 2, p.112/9.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., Vol 1, p.90/5.

<sup>10</sup> Taylor, The March. p.18.

<sup>11</sup> Tessin, Verbaende. Vol 2, p.14 and Vol 1, p.5.

Klaus Christian Richter, Die Geschichte der deutschen Kavallerie 1919-1945, (Stuttgart, FRG: Motorbuch Verlag), 1982, pp. 267-275 and 374-375.

The XV Cossack Corps was formed from the many disgruntled cossack prisoners of war and volunteers seeking to gain Cossack independence from the Soviets. Individual regiments were groupings of territorial clans such as from the Don Basin, the Terek Steppe, etc. Prior to 1945 these units had operated independently in support of established German units. The XV Cossack Corps was organized February 1, 1945 as follows:

- 1st Cossack Cavalry Division
  - Don Cossack Regiment 1
  - Siberian Cossack Regiment 2
  - Kuban Cossack Regiment 4
  - Cossack Artillery Regiment 1

2nd Cossack Cavalry Division  
Kuban Cossack Regiment 3  
Don Cossack Regiment 5  
Terek Cossack Regiment 6  
Cossack Artillery Regiment 2

Plastun (Infantry) Brigade  
Plastun (Infantry) Regiment 7  
Plastun (Infantry) Regiment 8  
Reconnaissance Detachment

12 R. James Bender and Richard D. Law, Uniforms, Organization and History of the Afrikakorps. (San Jose: R. James Bender), 1973, pp.28-34.

The Africa Corps was more lightly organized than most other German corps of the war. During the campaign it had the 5th Light Division (later the 21st Panzer Division) and the 15th Panzer Division assigned. In addition the following individual combat units were assigned to the corps:

Anti-Tank Battalion 605  
1st Bn. Flak Regiment 18  
1st Bn. Flak Regiment 33  
Flak Battalion 606  
Reconnaissance Company 580

13 Tessin, Verbaende. Vol 1, p.18.

Panzer Corps Grossdeutschland had the proposed organization of:

Panzer Grenadier Division Grossdeutschland  
Panzer Grenadier Division Brandenburg  
Corps Fusilier Regiment  
Heavy Tank Battalion  
One Artillery Regiment  
Armored Engineer Battalion

Panzer Corps Feldherrnhalle had the proposed organization of:

Panzer Division Feldherrnhalle  
Panzer Grenadier Division Feldherrnhalle 2  
Corps Fusilier Regiment  
Heavy Tank Battalion  
One Artillery Regiment  
Armored Engineer Battalion

Both corps were intended to be a more permanent organization than other corps with divisions assigned on a more permanent basis.

14 Tessin, Verbaende. Vol 2, pp.14, 95, 160; Vol 3, pp.5-6; Vol 4, p.55; Vol 5, pp. 43, 53, 78, 155, 225, 246.

15 Tessin, Verbaende. Vol 2, pp.1-3, 5-7, 84-86, 89-92, 153, 154-156, 220-222, 226-227, 281-283; Vol 3, pp.1-9, 50-52, 87-90, 124-126, 160-162, 191-194, 227-229, 287-289; Vol 4, pp.1-3, 24-27, 50-52, 80-83, 111-112, 129-131, 221.

16 Tessin, Verbaende. Vol 1, pp.17-19.

17 Tessin, Verbaende. Vol 2, pp.1-3, 5-7, 84-86, 89-92, 153, 154-156, 220-222, 226-227, 281-283; Vol 3, pp.1-9, 50-52, 87-90, 124-126, 160-162, 191-194, 227-229, 287-289; Vol 4, pp.1-3, 24-27, 50-52, 80-83, 111-112, 129-131, 221.

18 Silvester Stadler, Die Offensive gegen Kursk 1943, (Osnabrueck, FRG: Munin Verlag), 1980, p.38.

CHAPTER 4  
BACKGROUND, EDUCATION, AND EXPERIENCE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will be to examine the background, education, and experience factors of German corps commanders in World War II. A total of 332 men served as permanent or acting commanders for the ninety-three German Army corps from 1939 to 1945. Central to a thorough understanding of these factors is a review of the system of general officer grades and their equivalent American counterparts. The basic grade system is shown below:

Table 6  
General Officer Grades

German Grade	Abbreviation	English Translation	American Equivalent
Generalfeldmarschall	GFM	Field Marschal	General of the Army
Generaloberst	GO	Colonel General	General
General der Infanterie	GdI	General of Infantry	Lieutenant General

German Rank	Abbreviation	English Translation	American Equivalent
General der Artillerie	GdA	General of Artillery	Lieutenant General
General der Panzer	GdPz	General of Panzers	"
General der Pionier	GdPi	General of Engineers	"
General der Gebirgs- truppe	GdGebTr	General of Mountain Troops	"
General der Kavallerie	GdKav	General of Cavalry	"
Generalleutnant	GL	Lieutenant General	Major General
Generalmajor	GM	Major General	Brigadier General

In comparing German grades with American ones it should be noted that a German generalmajor was routinely a commander of a division while his American counterpart seldom was. Moving up, a generalleutnant could command either a division or corps, while his major general American counterpart most often stayed at division level.<sup>1</sup> To avoid this mental conversion of grades I will use German grade for all commanders.



## BACKGROUND

### AGE

The first characteristic to be examined is age. Major General J.F.C. Fuller in his work Generalship Its Diseases and Their Cure: A Study of the Personal Factor in Command states that physical vigor and energy are important assets of generalship and are usually found in younger men.<sup>2</sup> Despite this theory, the German corps commanders were a mature group of individuals and were not young by the standards of the time. The following information shows the age groups as defined by age on assuming corps command.

Table 7  
Age of Commanders

Age	Number of Officers*	Percentage of Total
40 to 44	6	1.8
45 to 50	104	31.8
51 to 55	162	49.5
56 to 60	44	13.4
61 to 65	11	3.3

\* Note: Ages were determined for 327 of 332 commanders

The oldest individual was GL Hans Schmidt who was 64 years old when he assumed command of the IX Corps in 1940. The youngest was GM Kurt von Liebenstein who assumed command of the Africa Corps, January 1943, at age 43.

#### OFFICER SELECTION

Prior to World War I an individual could become an officer by attending one of ten cadet schools or by applying directly to a regimental commander. Applicants were evaluated for responsibility, willpower, and character. Educational factors were considered secondary. The most significant element of education was the "Abitur", a diploma recognizing nine years of primary and secondary education, and granting the recipient the right to enter a university. The state of Bavaria demanded the officer candidate possess this certificate while by 1910 some 63% of all Prussian cadets had earned one. Long term implications for the Abitur were even more significant as acceptance for General Staff training depended on it.<sup>3</sup>

During World War I, huge demands for officers caused a dilution in the character and educational standards of officer candidates. Casualties increased while replacements were drawn from older reservists and inexperienced young officers. In 1916 the Supreme Headquarters began to transfer members of the "old officer corps" from the front lines to General Staff service in an attempt<sup>4</sup> to prevent the total destruction of the traditional officer corps.

After the conflict selection again became difficult. Under the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles, the post-war Reichswehr was reduced to 4,000 officers, of whom 3,000 were wartime officers and 1,000 were promoted noncommissioned officers. Outside candidates were expected to have an extensive pre-university education level. The Abitur was desired but not required. In its place, the candidate could take special equivalency examinations, a system which assisted<sup>5</sup> enlisted candidates lacking in formal education.

The environment through which the future corps commanders entered service fostered candidates with all around excellent character rather than more educated, technically oriented individuals. Additionally, character was often judged by the status of family influence and wealth. One standard was that of nobility and will be examined next.

## NOBILITY

While most officers were members of the upper and middle classes, officers of noble descent had always figured prominently in German military tradition. During the Reichswehr era of 1924-1932, nobility again fared well in the composition of the officer corps. The following three tables reflect nobility composition of newly promoted majors (major), lieutenant colonels (oberstleutnant) and colonels (oberst). Many of the later corps commanders passed through<sup>6</sup> these grades during this time.

Table 8  
Newly Promoted Majors

Year	Promoted	Nobles	Percent Noble
1924	73	12	16.4
1925	68	16	23.5
1926	74	19	25.6
1927	81	17	20.9
1928	93	27	29.0
1929	65	16	24.6
1930	66	10	15.1
1931	90	17	18.8
1932	73	5	1.3
Total	683	139	20.3

Table 9  
Newly Promoted Lieutenant Colonels

Year	Promoted	Nobles	Percent Noble
1924	43	14	32.5
1925	30	6	20.0
1926	43	13	30.2
1927	61	17	27.8
1928	67	26	38.8
1929	71	17	23.9
1930	70	14	20.0
1931	83	22	26.5
1932	65	12	18.4
Total	533	141	26.4

Table 10  
Newly Promoted Colonels

Year	Promoted	Nobles	Percent Noble
1924	32	10	31.2
1925	27	12	44.4
1926	29	13	44.8
1927	34	7	20.5

# Newly Promoted Colonels (continued)

Year	Promoted	Nobles	Percent Noble
1928	45	13	28.8
1929	40	15	37.5
1930	46	11	23.9
1931	55	22	40.0
1932	45	10	22.2
Total	353	113	32.0

However, the high percentage of nobility during the 1932-1945 period diminished. In 1932, 23.8% of all officers were nobles with 52% of general officers in this category.<sup>7</sup> This percentage had dwindled by 1939. At the beginning of the war, although the Army had a large number of landed gentry and aristocracy, the percentage of noble general officers had dropped to 33%.<sup>8</sup> This percentage declined even further by 1944 when only 19% of all generals were nobles.<sup>9</sup>

The scope of this thesis must limit the thorough investigation of the various strata of nobility. David Nelson Spires' doctoral dissertation points out that:<sup>10</sup>

...as far as the Reichswehr is concerned, "old" officer families or those that traditionally had supplied officers to the army, could be more significant than "new" noble families.

Omer Bartov in his study of the German Army on the Eastern Front defines membership in the nobility as all officers with a "von" and other prefixs of aristocratic origin attached to the family name.<sup>11</sup> Using this definition, the following pattern of nobility emerges when examining the corps commanders.

Table 11  
Commanders of Noble Descent

Year	Commanders of Noble Descent in Corps Command
1937	8
1938	9
1939	13
1940	21
1941	22
1942	31
1943	31
1944	39
1945	27

Seventy-five (22.6%) of the corps commanders were members of the nobility. From the results of this analysis it appears as though this representation remained constant throughout the war. Additionally, this figure corresponds closely with the percentage of total general officers.

## EXPANSION OF THE REICHSWEHR

During the 1930s, the German Army dramatically increased in size. This expansion directly affected the Officer Corps. In 1938 for example, the Army expanded by 7,600 officers: 2,000 recruits, 2,500 lateral transfers from the police, 1,500 noncommissioned officer promotions, 1,800 reactivations from inactive service, and 1,600 Austrian officers incorporated into the Wehrmacht.<sup>12</sup> The variety of sources for general officers who later assumed corps command are as shown:

Table 12

### Commander's Background

Category	Number Commanders	Percentage
Career (Served in WWI and remained in Reichswehr)	268	80.7
Recalled from Retirement (In Reichswehr, retired)	22	6.6
Transferred from Police (Served in WWI, left Army, returned with Police rank)	27	8.1



# Commander's Background (continued)

Category	Number Commanders	Percentage
Joined during 1930s Expansion (Served in WWI, left Army, rejoined Army in mid 1930s)	4	1.2
Incorporated from Austrian Army	11	3.3

Several of these sources of officers should be explained. More than 80 general officers were recalled from active duty in 1939 from the inactive list, and with the continued expansion during the war many more were brought back.<sup>13</sup>

Twenty-two generals recalled to active duty later commanded at the corps level. Recall to service could be accomplished by two methods. Some retired officers were temporarily restored to the regular list, while others were designated z.V (zur Verfuegung) or "at disposal".<sup>14</sup> As expected, most recalled officers were among the oldest of the commanders. Seventeen returned to retirement during the war, one died in command, and four remained on active service. Only one corps commander who had been recalled from retirement was selected for higher command.<sup>15</sup>

During the mid 1930s many officers rejoined the Reichswehr from the police. As an inducement, these men retained their former police rank ranging from hauptmann (captain) to generalmajor.

Professional competence of officers who did not remain in the Army after World War I was not held in high regard. Guenther Blumentritt, a former army group chief of staff and commander of the 1st Airborne Army in 1945, stated that the performances of officers who retired in 1919 and rejoined during the mid-1930s was lower as these officers still believed in obsolete First World War experiences.<sup>16</sup>

Despite Blumentritt's assertion, twenty-seven generals who returned to the Army in the mid 1930s from the police achieved corps command. Most were absorbed into the infantry. Five later commanded at the army or army group level, representing 19% of all corps commanders with police backgrounds, and are shown below:<sup>17</sup>

Table 13

Corps Commanders with Police Backgrounds

Grade Name	Corps Command	Highest Grade	Higher Commands
GdPz Eberbach	XXXXVII Pz	GdPz	5th Panzer Army
	XXXXVIII Pz		7th Army
	XXXX Pz		

# Corps Commanders with Police Backgrounds (continued)

Grade	Name	Corps Command	Highest Grade	Higher Commands
GdI	Grasser	XXVI LVI Pz	GdI	11th Army
GL	Mueller,F	V XXXIV z.b.V LIX LXVIII	GdI	4th Army <sup>18</sup>
GdI	Wiese	VIII XXXV	GdI	19th Army
GdI	von Zangen	LXXXIV LXXXVII	GdI	15th Army

In examining Blumentritt's assertion more deeply, we find that seven former police officers commanded panzer corps, positions that would seem to require the greatest understanding of modern mobile warfare. This would seem to undermine the "anti-police" school of thought until we look at duration of command. The following table shows that only two (29%) commanded longer than one month. Although Kaellner and Schuenemann were killed in action it appears as though "police" commanders were thought of more as temporary panzer corps commanders than permanent.

Table 14

## Panzer Corps Commanders with Police Backgrounds

Grade	Name	Corps	Duration of Command
GL	Beyer, F	LVII Pz	8 days
GdPz	Eberbach	XXXXVII Pz	7 days
		XXXXVIII Pz	27 days
		XXXX Pz	9 days
GdPz	Fries	XXXXVI Pz	4 months
GL	Grasser	LVI Pz	24 days
GdPz	Henrici, S	XXXX Pz	18 months
GL	Kaellner	XXIV Pz	29 days
GL	Schuenermann	XXXIX Pz	1 day

After the annexation of Austria in 1938 (the Anschluss), three Austrian corps composed of six divisions were incorporated into the German Army, with a corresponding number of senior officers.<sup>19</sup> Austrian officers compared favorably to their German counterparts in competency and leadership. The following ten Austrian officers achieved corps command and were promoted to higher command positions as shown:<sup>20</sup>

Table 15

## Austrian Army and Army Group Commanders

Grade	Name	Corps Command	Highest Grade	Higher Commands
GdI	Rendulic	XXXV	GO	2nd Panzer Army 20th Mountain Army Army Group Kurland Army Group North Army Group South
GdPz	Raus	XXXXVII Pz	GO	1st Panzer Army 3rd Panzer Army 4th Panzer Army
GL	Eibl	XXIV Pz	GdI (Post.)	None (KIA) <sup>21</sup>
GdI	Materna	XX	GdI	None
GdI	Beyer, E	XVIII	GdI	None (Died)
GdA	Martinek	XXXIX Pz	GdA	None (KIA)
GL	Feurstein	LXII LXX LI Mtn	GdGebTr	None
GL	Eglseer	XVIII Mtn	GdGebTr	None (Killed in plane crash)
GL	Ringel	LXIX Mtn	GdGebTr	None
GL	von Nagy	LXXI	GdI	None
GdPz	Hubicki	LXXXIX Pz	GdPz	None

## BRANCH AFFILIATION

Branch rivalries played a large role in command relationships in the Army during both the expansion era and actual wartime. David Nelson Spires again presents baseline data for branch composition for promotion in the Reichswehr era as shown for generalmajor, generalleutnant, and general.<sup>22</sup>

Table 16  
Newly Promoted Generalmajor

Year	Promoted	Infantry		Cavalry		Artillery		Technical	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1924	13	4	30.7	2	15.4	7	53.8	0	0.0
1925	8	1	12.5	2	25.0	4	50.0	1	12.5
1926	10	5	50.0	1	10.0	3	30.0	1	10.0
1927	15	7	46.6	1	6.6	5	33.3	2	13.3
1928	16	11	68.7	0	0.0	5	31.2	0	0.0
1929	17	10	58.8	2	11.7	5	29.4	0	0.0
1930	19	12	63.1	0	0.0	7	36.8	0	0.0
1931	17	10	58.8	1	11.7	4	23.5	2	11.7
1932	19	11	57.8	2	10.5	6	31.5	0	0.0
Total	134	71	52.9	11	8.2	46	34.3	6	4.4

Table 17  
Newly Promoted Generalleutnant

Year	Promoted	Infantry		Cavalry		Artillery		Technical	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1924	4	3	75.0	0	0.0	1	25.0	0	0.0
1925	4	2	50.0	1	25.0	1	25.0	0	0.0
1926	5	5	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
1927	7	4	57.1	1	14.2	2	28.5	0	0.0
1928	6	1	16.6	3	50.0	2	33.3	0	0.0
1929	6	3	50.0	1	16.6	2	33.3	0	0.0
1930	7	4	57.1	1	14.2	2	28.5	0	0.0
1931	5	3	60.0	1	20.0	1	20.0	0	0.0
1932	6	4	66.6	0	0.0	2	33.3	0	0.0
Total	50	29	58.0	8	16.0	13	26.0	0	0.0

Table 18  
Newly Promoted General der Infanterie, etc.

Year	Promoted	Infantry		Cavalry		Artillery		Technical	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1924	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
1925	2	1	50.0	1	50.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

Newly Promoted General der Infanterie, etc. (continued)

Year	Promoted	Infantry		Cavalry		Artillery		Technical	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1926	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
1927	2	1	50.0	0	0.0	1	50.0	0	0.0
1928	2	1	50.0	0	0.0	1	50.0	0	0.0
1929	1	1	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
1930	1	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100.0	0	0.0
1931	1	1	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
1932	1	1	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	8	5	62.5	0	0.0	3	37.5	0	0.0

Older generals viewed infantry as the dominant branch and attempted to control the Army Personnel Branch to the detriment of other branch officers.<sup>23</sup> This was especially so with respect to the formation of the new panzer forces. Hasso von Manteuffel stated that the new panzer branch required special leaders and commanders, but the older arms displayed opposing views. To maintain stability within the armored force, GO Heinz Guderian reported directly to Hitler as Inspector-General of Armored Troops and had full input<sup>24</sup> concerning appointments to the command of armored formations.



The distribution of corps commanders by branch was as follows:

Table 19  
Branch Affiliation

Branch	Number of Commanders	Percentage
Infantry	171	51.5
Artillery	63	18.9
Panzer	54	16.2
Cavalry	18	5.4
Mountain Troops	15	4.5
Engineer	9	2.7
Luftwaffe	2	0.6

Another aspect of branch affiliation concerns the commanders of panzer corps and mountain corps. Sixty-one per cent of all panzer corps commanders were of the panzer branch, while forty-one percent of the commanders of the mountain corps were mountain troop officers. Artillery and cavalry officers commanded in both infantry and panzer corps. Infantry generals served across the entire spectrum of units.

## GENERAL STAFF SERVICE

The German General Staff Corps was a group of specially selected, trained, and educated officers. Its mission was to serve as a control mechanism to assist the commander in directing large military units. This included planning, coordinating, supervising, and assuring operational readiness.<sup>25</sup>

Candidates for the General Staff were selected based on "character, disposition, physical, and intellectual abilities".<sup>26</sup> Membership was always select. Fewer than one percent of all officers in the Army were selected as General Staff Corps officers in the Prussian Army. Membership rose to twenty percent during the Weimar Republic.<sup>27</sup> By 1939, this amounted to 417 officers.<sup>28</sup>

Austrian General Staff officers had little difficulty after the Anschluss in obtaining positions on the German General Staff. A former Austrian officer, General de Bartha, stated that in many respects the Austrian General Staff was the equal of its German counterpart.<sup>29</sup>

Although the size of the General Staff increased to 1167 officers by 1944, their relative importance in the Army hierarchy began to decrease beginning in 1941.<sup>30</sup> After the failure to take Moscow in December 1941, Hitler unfairly blamed not only several high ranking commanders, but also the General Staff for the lack of adequate winter preparations.<sup>31</sup>

In September 1942 Hitler accused the General Staff of "cowardice" and berated GO Halder, Chief of Army General Staff. This led to Halder's dismissal and marked the end of the period when the General Staff truly conducted operations.

32

Many corps commanders were members of the General Staff. Their prominence during the war was significant and will be discussed at length in a later chapter. Distribution of corps commanders with General Staff experience is as shown:

33

Table 20

Commanders from the General Staff

Year	Number of Commanders from General Staff	Percentage of Total
1939	31	66
1940	50	70
1941	61	71
1942	78	57
1943	83	49
1944	82	40
1945	50	36

This trend mirrors Hitler's increasing intervention with the officer corps. By January 1943 he ordered the reintegration of the General Staff into the regular officer corps and established performance as the primary criteria for promotion, not General Staff membership.<sup>34</sup>

#### PREVIOUS COMMAND AND STAFF EXPERIENCE

As in all military organizations, most corps commanders had established a pattern of successful performance at previous command and staff assignments. In the staff arena, two General Staff positions were considered extremely important: operations officer (Ia) of a division and chief of staff at a corps or higher level.

Division operations officers normally held the rank of major. In addition to his duties in operations, he also served as the chief of staff as the division structure did not allocate a separate position for one. The division supply officer (Ib) and the division intelligence officer (Ic) were subordinated to him.<sup>35</sup>

Chiefs of staff had much more prestige and authority than other officers of equal rank.<sup>36</sup> Colonels and lieutenant colonels

served as corps chiefs of staff, while army chiefs of staff were usually colonels or major generals. Responsibilities for the corps chief of staff were initially laid out in the Prussian Army in 1814 and formalized in 1865 in a royal order which stated: <sup>37</sup>

When I have given no special instructions on filling the post of a general commanding during his temporary absence, the chief of the General Staff will transact the current duties of the general...

In reviewing prior staff service, thirty corps commanders had been division operations officers, sixty-six served previously as corps chiefs of staff, and thirty-eight were army chiefs of staff. Multiple staff assignments of service as both corps and army chief of staff were held by thirty-four later commanders. While these staff assignments were not mandatory prerequisites for future command, they certainly were indicators of excellent performance and potential.

In addition to previous staff experience, prior division command was essential for elevation to corps command. This trend is amplified by the following division command summary: <sup>38</sup>

Table 21  
Prior Division Command Experience

Corps Commanders who were commanders of:	Number	Percentage
Infantry Divisions	246	74.1
Panzer Divisions	40	12.0
Reserve Divisions	0	0.0
Infantry and Panzer Divisions	11	3.3
No division command	35	10.5

An analysis of prior division command experience reveals several important trends. First, 89.5% of all corps commanders had prior division command experience. Most of the thirty-five who did not were very senior generals who commanded corps at the start of the war. Thus, their opportunities for division command were limited by the smaller size of the army in the mid-1930s. Those less senior who did not command at the division level frequently were General Staff officers who held significant staff commands at corps, army, and army group level.

None of the corps commanders had previous reserve division command as his sole division command experience. It is safe to conclude that reserve division command signalled little possibility for further command progression.

Fifty-one corps commanders (15.4%) previously commanded panzer divisions. In examining the panzer corps, thirty-six commanders (40.9%) had previously commanded panzer divisions. Of every three panzer division commanders who later commanded at the corps level, two commanded a panzer corps while one commanded a corps of a different type. No single panzer division served as an overwhelming source of future panzer corps commanders. The 4th and 11th Panzer Divisions each produced four. When an individual proved he could successfully command division mobile forces, he was quite likely to be retained by Guderian and the panzer branch for further panzer corps commands, rather than be transferred to other formations.

#### INFLUENCE OF THE NAZI PARTY

According to Helmut Kleikamp, author of "The Army Personnel Office", with very few exceptions the Nazi party exercised no influence on Army appointments. Army officer promotions and assignments were based on performance and qualifications, not political considerations.

One facet of party affiliation was the Nazi Party's highest decoration for service, "The Decoration of 9 November 1923" also known as "The Blood Order". Hitler created this decoration in March 1934 to commemorate the failed Putsch (attempted overthrow of Bavarian government) of November 9, 1923 in Munich. Eligibility was initially limited to persons who had participated in the events of November 9th and who were Party members by January 1, 1932. These individuals were affectionally known as "Old Comrades". In 1938, eligibility was expanded to persons who had rendered outstanding services to the Party in the 1920s and had received a Weimar court death sentence and served at least one year in jail for political crimes, or been severely wounded or killed in Party service.<sup>40</sup>

Awards for this first criterion of eligibility totaled 1500. Of these 810 went to Party members, 500 to Freikorps troopers, and 140 to Reichswehr and Police members. Seven Reichswehr recipients went on to become general officers: Johannes Block, Curt-Ulrich von Gersdorff, Wolfdietrich von Xylander, Eduard Zorn, Robert Macher, Paul Hermann, and Theodor Kretschmer. Only one went on to become a corps commander.<sup>41</sup>

Although Party officials may have had no influence on appointments and promotions, indirect pressures existed in the presence of several senior Army officials who sympathized with the Nazis and could affect personnel issues.<sup>42</sup> Generalfeldmarschall Wilhelm Keitel, General der Infanterie Rudolf Schmundt, and General der Infanterie Wilhelm Burgdorf were three of these men.



Wilhelm Keitel served as Chief of Staff of the Combined Services (OKW) from 1938 to the end of the war. Richard Brett-Smith, author of Hitler's Generals, states that Keitel did more than anyone to "bring about the domination of the Reichswehr by the Nazis." Married to Generalfeldmarschall von Blomberg's daughter, he was in addition the brother of the Chief of the Army Personnel Office Bodewin Keitel and undoubtedly had some influence in appointments. His duty assignment can be summarized as funneling Hitler's orders down to the Army and passing up, with a dose of interpretation,<sup>43</sup> their complaints and questions to the Fuehrer.

Rudolf Schmundt was Chief of the Army Personnel Office from Bodewin Keitel's departure in 1942 to his own death as a result of injuries suffered in the July 20 bombing at Hitler's headquarters. Again Brett-Smith categorizes Schmundt as an avowed Nazi who was known throughout the Officer Corps as "John the Disciple". Schmundt influenced a wide range of appointments to include even army group command and probably speeded the rise of several like-minded officers.<sup>44</sup>

Wilhelm Burgdorf served faithfully as chief Wehrmacht adjutant to Hitler prior to assuming the position of Personnel Chief from Rudolf Schmundt in 1944. He was "hated for his brutality by 99 per cent of the officer corps" stated Manfred Rommel, son of Generalfeldmarschall Rommel. From colonel to general he did not

command troops but did show loyalty and discretion toward Hitler and was entrusted with visiting Rommel with the choice of suicide or<sup>45</sup> arrest for involvement in the July 20 Plot.

The influence of these men on the Army Personnel Office was probably in the line of what they did not do more than what they did. It would have been very difficult to explain that a particular officer was selected for a position because he was a National Socialist. But for officers seeking to return to active duty from retirement or volunteering for frontline service from the Replacement Army bureaucratic delays and refusals were surely in<sup>46</sup> order for chronic complainers against the Nazis.

#### CHAPTER SUMMARY

The background information in this chapter shows the corps commanders generally to be mature individuals of approximately 50-57 years of age. About 23 % were members of the nobility, generally the same as for general officers as a whole. Most commanders were career soldiers with uninterrupted service from World War I, some entered the Army from the police, the Austrian Army after the Anschluss, and some were recalled from retirement. Concerning branch affiliation, 52 % were infantry officers, 19 % artillery, and 16 % panzer. Almost 50 % of the corps commanders were General Staff officers with many having staff experience as division operations officers and corps chiefs of staff. More than 89 % had been division commanders. Finally, Nazi Party influence was minimal in their rise.

## ENDNOTES

1 Richard Brett-Smith, Hitler's Generals, (San Rafael, California: Presidio Press), 1977, p.12.

2 J.F.C. Fuller, Generalship Its Diseases and Their Cure: A Study of the Personal Factor in Command, (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Military Service Publishing Co.), 1936, p.70.

3 Martin van Creveld, Fighting Power, German Military Performance, 1914-1945, (Potomac, Maryland: C&L Associates), 1980, pp. 150-152.

4 Martin van Creveld, Fighting Power, p. 152.

5 Martin van Creveld, Fighting Power, p. 152.

The selection process for Eduard Zorn, a later generalmajor, was a typical one and worthy of review. Late in 1920 Zorn applied in writing to the commander of Infantry Regiment 19 Colonel Ritter von Haack for admission for officer training. In his application Zorn included information on: date of birth, state affiliation, religion, level of education, profession of father, and personal history. In addition he furnished two recommendation letters from prominent citizens of his community.

During the ensuing background investigation, Zorn underwent a physical aptitude and medical test. With these complete, he participated in a one to three day personal interview with Colonel von Haack and selected members of his staff.

The results of this process reflect Zorn's aptitude for service. He was a candidate for the Abitur which fulfilled educational requirements. His character was exemplary as he was the son of an officer killed in action during World War I. Additionally, his brother Hans was already a junior officer in the regiment and had an excellent service record himself. In sum, Eduard Zorn was intelligent, physically fit, motivated, and apolitical. David Nelson Spires, "The Career of the Reichswehr Officer", (Doctor of Philosophy Dissertation: University of Washington), 1979, pp.9-12.

6 David Nelson Spires, "The Career of the Reichswehr Officer", p.508.

7 Omer Bartov, The Eastern Front, 1941-45, German Troops and the Barbarisation of Warfare, (New York: St. Martin's Press), 1986, p.43.

8 Richard Brett-Smith, Hitler's Generals, p.5.

9 Omer Bartov, The Eastern Front, p.43.

10 David Nelson Spires, "The Career of the Reichswehr Officer", p.27.

- 11
- 12 Omer Bartov, The Eastern Front, p.172.
- Michael Geyer, "The Transformation of the German Officer Corps" (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan), p.44.
- 13 Telford Taylor, The March of Conquest: The German Victories in Western Europe, 1940, (New York: Simon and Schuster), 1958, pp.21 and 409.
- 14 Telford Taylor, The March, p. 409.

Table 22  
Corps Commanders Coming Out of Retirement

Grade	Name	Corps Commanded	Date Originally Retired	Date Finally Retired
GdI	Boehm-Tettelbach	XXXII XXXVII II	31.3.33	28.2.43
GL	Brandt,G	XXXII	31.1.31	31.8.42
GL	Feige	XXXVI	30.9.35	30.6.42
GdI	Geyer	IX	30.4.39	31.12.43
GL	von Gienanth	XXXVI	30.9.33	30.6.43
GdI	von Greiff	III XXXXV	31.12.29	31.8.42
GdI	Haenicke	XXXVIII	30.9.32	Did not
GL	Heinemann	LXV	30.9.37	28.2.45
GdA	Kaupisch	XXXI	30.9.32	30.6.42
GdK	von Kleist	XXII	28.2.38	Did not
GdI	Koch,F	XXXXIV	30.9.31	31.5.42
GdA	Lucht	XIII LXVI LXXXII	31.3.32	Did not
GdI	Metz,H	XXXIV	1.4.31	31.1.43
GdI	von Nagy	LXXI	31.12.35	31.1.43
GdK	von Pogrell	XXXII	28.2.38	31.5.42
GdI	von Prager	XXV XXVII	1.2.31	30.6.42
GdI	von Schenckendorff	XXXV	28.2.30	Died 6.7.43
GdI	Schmidt,H	IX	31.1.31	31.10.43
GdI	Schwandner	LIX	1934	30.8.42
GdA	Ulex	X	31.3.39	31.12.41
GM	von Unger	XXXIII	31.7.32	Did not
GdI	Wiktorin	XXVIII	1935	30.11.44

- 15 Erwin Lenfeld and Franz Thomas, Die Eichenlaubtraeger, p.91.

GdK Ewald von Kleist commanded the XXII Corps from 1939-1940. He continued his rise with the commands of Panzer Group Kleist, 1st Panzer Army, Army Group A, and Army Group South Ukraine. He was dismissed from the service March 30, 1944 and died in 1954 in a Soviet Prisoner of War Camp.

16 Guenther Blumentritt, "The German Armies of 1914 and 1939", U.S. Army Historical Division Study MS# B-296, (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History), 1947, p.46.

17 Wolf Keilig, Die Generale des Heeres, pp.76,113,232,370,379.

The following corps commanders transferred from the Police to the Army:

Table 23  
Corps Commanders from the Police

Grade	Name	Corps	Date Transferred from Police	Grade retained from Police
GdI	Abraham	LXIII	15.10.35	Major
GL	Beyer,F	XVII	1.4.35	Oberstleutnant
		XXXXIX		
		LXXX		
		LVII		
GL	Chill	XXVI	1.10.36	Major
		LV		
GdPz	Eberbach	XXXXVII Pz	1.7.35	Major
		XXXXVIII Pz		
		XXXX Pz		
GdPz	Fries	XXXXVI Pz	1936	Major
GdI	Grasser	XXVI	1935	Major
		LVI		
GdGbT	von Hengl	XIX	6.10.36	Major
		LIX		
GdPz	Henrici,S	XXXX Pz	1.10.35	Oberst
GL	Hohn	IX	1.9.35	Hauptmann
GL	Jahr	XXIV	22.11.35	Oberstleutnant
GL	Kaellner	XXIV	1935	Hauptmann
GL	Lasch	LXIV	1.7.35	Major
GdI	von Leyser	XV	15.3.35	Oberstleutnant
		XXI		
		XXVI		
GL	Mueller,F	V	16.3.36	Major
		XXXIV		
		LIX		
		LXVIII		
GL	Neumann,FW	XXX	15.10.35	Oberstleutnant
		XXXIII		
		LXXXIX		
GdI	von Oven	XXXXIII	15.3.35	Oberstleutnant
GdA	Pfeiffer	VI	1.10.35	Oberstleutnant
GL	Roettig	LXVI	1.10.35	Oberst
GdPi	Sachs	LXIV	1.10.35	Oberst
GL	Schuenenmann	XXXIX Pz	16.3.36	Major
GL	Sponheimer	XXVIII	16.3.36	Oberst
		X		
		LIV		
		LXVII		

# Corps Commanders from the Police (continued)

Grade	Name	Corps	Date Transferred from Police	Grade retained from Police
GdI	Strecker	XI XVII	14.6.35	Generalmajor
GL	Usinger	I	1.10.35	Major
GdI	Wiese	VIII XXXV	1.8.35	Major
GdI	Witthoeft	XXVII	1.4.36	Oberst
GM	Wolpert	LXXXVIII	15.10.35	Oberstleutnant
GdI	von Zangen	LXXXIV LXXXVII	1.8.35	Oberstleutnant

18 Erwin Lenfeld and Franz Thomas, Die Eichenlaubtraeger 1940-1945. (Wiener Neustadt, Oesterreich: Weillburg Verlag), 1982, p.105. GdI Friedrich Wilhelm Mueller made the most rapid rise of the "Police" commanders. Laterally transferring from the Hamburg Police in March 1936, he was a battalion commander from 1938-1940, a regimental commander 1940-1942, and a division commander from 1942-1944. In 1944 he served as both temporary and permanent corps commander before assuming command of the 4th Army January 29, 1945. After the war he was condemned for war crimes and hanged in Athens, May 1947.

19 Friedrich Stahl, Heereseinteilung 1939, (Friedberg, FRG: Podzun-Pallas-Verlag), 1953, p.145.

20 Wolf Keilig, Die Generale des Heeres. (Friedberg, FRG: Podzun-Pallas-Verlag), 1983, pp.33,78,80,89,152,218,237,273,278.

21 Dermot Bradley and Richard Schulze-Kossens, Taetigkeitsbericht des Chefs des Heerespersonalamtes General der Infanterie Rudolf Schmunt: 1.10.42-29.10.44. (Osnabrueck, FRG.: Biblio Verlag), 1984, p.42. GL Eibl became the only corps commander to be killed by his own troops when he was seriously wounded by a handgrenade thrown by a soldier in a passing Italian truck column as he was sitting on the fender of his staff car. He underwent emergency surgery, without anathesia, which resulted in the amputation of a leg, but died.

22 David Nelson Spires, "The Career of the Reichswehr Officer", pp.508-509.

23 Heinz Guderian and Kurt Zeitzler, "Comments on P-041a-P-041hh", U.S. Army Historical Division Study MS# P-04111, (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History), 1953, p.2.

24 Hasso von Manteuffel, "Fast Mobile and Armored Troops", U.S. Army Historical Division Study MS# B-036, (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History), 1945, pp.3,10,19.

25 Trevor N. Dupuy, The German General Staff. Institution of Demonstrated Excellence for National Command, Planning, Coordination, and Combat Performance. (Dunn Lorine, VA.: Historical Evaluation and Research Organization), 1984, p.6.

26 Franz Halder, "Control of the German Army General Staff", U.S. Army Historical Division Study MS# P-041d, (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History), 1952, p.3.

27 Trevor N. Dupuy, General Staff, pp.6 and B-1.

28 W. Victor Madej, German Army Order of Battle 1939-1945, (Allentown, Pennsylvania: Game Marketing Company), 1981, Vol 1, p.37.

29 de Bartha, "Austro-Hungarian General Staff", U.S. Army Historical Division Study MS# C-063, (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History), 1946, p.5.

30 Walter Goerlitz, History of the German General Staff 1657-1945. (New York: Praeger), 1953, p.418.

31 Walter Goerlitz, History, p.405.

32 Hansgeorg Model, Der deutsche Generalstabsoffizier, (Frankfurt, FRG: Bernard & Graefe Verlag), 1968, p.127.

33 Michael Geyer, "The Transformation of the German Officer Corps" p.47.

34 Helmut Kleikamp, "German Army High Command: The Central Branch of the Army General Staff", U.S. Army Historical Division Study MS# P-041x, (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History), 1952, p.7.

35 Martin van Creveld, Fighting Power, German Military Performance, 1914-1945, (Potomac, Maryland: C&L Defense Consultants), 1980, p.55.

36 Richard Brett-Smith, Hitler's Generals, p.13.

37 Bronsart von Schellendorf, The Duties of the General Staff (Volume 1). (London: C. Kegan Paul & Company), 1877, p.160.

38 The following individuals commanded both panzer divisions and panzer corps.

Table 24  
Panzer Corps Commanders from Panzer Divisions

Grade	Name	Corps Commanded	Division Commanded
GdPz	von Arnim, H	XXXIX Pz	17th Pz

# Panzer Corps Commanders from Panzer Divisions (continued)

Grade	Name	Corps Commanded	Division Commanded
GdPz	Balck	XXXX Pz XXXXVIII Pz XIV Pz	11th Pz
GdPz	Breith,H	III Pz	3rd Pz
GdPz	Cruewell	Africa	11th Pz
GdPz	Decker	XXXIX Pz	5th Pz
GdPz	Eberbach	XXXXVII Pz XXXXVIII Pz XXXX Pz	4th Pz
GdPz	von Edelsheim	XXXXVIII Pz	24th Pz
GdPz	von Esebeck,H	LVII Pz XXXXVI Pz	2nd Pz,11th Pz 15th Pz
GdPz	Fehn,G	XXXX Pz Africa	5th Pz
GdPz	von Funck	XXXXVII Pz	7th Pz
GdPz	Geyr von Schweppenbourg	III Pz XXXX Pz	3rd Pz
GL	Harpe	XXXXI Pz	12th Pz
Oberst	Heidkaemper	XXIV Pz	4th Pz
GL	Heim	XXXXVIII Pz	14th Pz
GdPz	Herr	LXXVI Pz	13th Pz
GdPz	Hube	XIV Pz	16th Pz
GL	Kaellner	XXIV Pz	19th Pz
GdPz	von Kessel	VII Pz	20th Pz
GdPz	Kirchner	LVII Pz	1st Pz
GdPz	von Knobelsdorff	XXIV Pz XXXX Pz XXXXVIII Pz	19th Pz
GdPz	Krueger,W	LVIII Pz	1st Pz
GdPz	von Langermann und Erlencamp	XXIV Pz	4th Pz
GdA	Lemelsen	XXXXVII Pz	5th Pz
GL	von Luettwitz,S	XXXXVI Pz	26th Pz
GL	von Luettwitz,H	XXXXVII Pz	2nd Pz,20th Pz
GdPz	Nehring	XXIV Pz XXXXVIII Pz Africa	18th Pz
GdPz	Raus	XXXXVII Pz	6th Pz
GdPz	Rommel	Africa	7th Pz
GdPz	von Saucken	XXXIX Pz Gross Deutschland III Pz	4th Pz
GdPz	Schaal	LVI Pz	10th Pz
GdPz	von Schwerin,G	LVI Pz	116th Pz
GdPz	von Senger und Etterlein	XIV Pz	17th Pz
GdPz	von Thoma	Africa	6th Pz,17th Pz 20th Pz
GM	von Vaerst	Africa	15th Pz
GL	von Vormann	XXXXVII Pz	23rd Pz
GL	von Wietersheim,W	XXXXI Pz	11th Pz



39 Helmut Kleikamp, "The Army Personnel Office", U.S. Army Historical Division Study MS# P-041hh, (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History), 1952, p.37.

40 John R. Angolia, For Fuehrer and Fatherland; Military Awards of the Third Reich (Volume 1-2), (San Jose: R. James Bender), 1976, Vol 2, p.186.

41 Klaus Patzwall, Der Blutorden der NDSAP, (Hamburg, FRG.: Patzwall Verlag), 1985, pp.11-56.

Block was dismissed from the Reichswehr May 31, 1924. He reentered in 1934 and served as a battalion commander from 1937-1940, and a regimental commander from 1940-1942 prior to command of the 294th Infantry Division. During the last two years of the war he commanded three different corps before being killed in action January 26, 1945 near Lask Poland. His "Blood Order" medal number was #1393. Source: Lenfield and Thomas, Die Eichenlaubtraeger, p.353.

42 Dr. S.A. Lewis, Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, in a private discussion circa October 1987.

43 Richard Brett-Smith, Hitler's Generals, pp.188-190.

44 Richard Brett-Smith, Hitler's Generals, pp.193-194.

45 Richard Brett-Smith, Hitler's Generals, pp.194-195.

46 Hermann Geyer, Das IX Armeekorps im Ostfeldzug 1941, (Neckargemuend, FRG: Scharnhorst Buchkameradschaft), 1969, pp.8-10.

An excellent example of this is shown in the career of Herman Geyer. Born in 1882, he served in both staff and command positions in World War I and the Reichswehr before assuming command of the V Corps in 1935. He left active duty in April 1939 embittered at the thought of the "injustice" at having to retire at this time. However his retirement ended after only four months when he returned to service as the commander of the IX Corps which he led in the French Campaign winning a Knight's Cross. Geyer was dismissed again in January 1942 after a serious disagreement with his army commander Generaloberst Hoepfner. He attempted to regain active command but was known to Post Minister Ohnesorge as a critic of the Nazi Party. His requests went unanswered from the Personnel Office and he finally committed suicide in 1946.

## CHAPTER 5

### PERFORMANCE, PROMOTION, AND POTENTIAL

#### INTRODUCTION

To this point this study has examined many of the background characteristics of corps commanders. This chapter will review the actual performance of the generals in corps command by examining four major areas: demonstrated performance, as evidenced by awards and decorations, promotion, by examining the German Army promotion system, potential, through advancement to higher command, and the final disposition of the commanders to include retirements, reliefs, prisoners of war, and killed in action.

#### PERFORMANCE

The first characteristic examined is demonstrated performance of duty through the German system of awards and decorations. J.F.C. Fuller, in his treatise on generalship, stated that heroism is the "soul of leadership" and is essential to generalship.<sup>1</sup>

The Germans apparently agreed with Fuller as they established the most elaborate awards system of any combatants in the war, due in part to their experience in World War I. The awards system then was mismanaged, with too few different medals, confusing distinctions between bravery and service, and separate awards for officers and enlisted men. In addition, the subordinate states of Germany, such as Bavaria, issued their own awards.<sup>2</sup>

At the outbreak of World War II, the Iron Cross 1st Class and 2nd Class were reinstituted. Both medals had originally been proposed by Colonel Gneisenau to King Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia in 1811, for acts of military bravery. Two years later both were officially founded and awarded to Prussian soldiers during the campaigns against Napoleon. Both awards were reinstituted by Kaiser Wilhelm I in 1870 during the Franco-Prussian War, and were open to all Germans, not only Prussians. In 1914 Kaiser Wilhelm II reopened the awards and expanded eligibility to include bravery in the field or for service to the war effort.<sup>3</sup>

On September 1, 1939 Hitler reinstituted the venerable Iron Cross 2nd Class to reward a single act of bravery in combat beyond the normal requirements of duty. It could be awarded to all members of the Armed Forces or to non-military individuals serving with the military. The Iron Cross 1st Class, reinstituted the same day, was

usually awarded for an additional three to five significant acts.<sup>4</sup>  
Although the intent was to let an appropriate time pass between  
award of the 2nd Class to that of the 1st Class, this could be  
compressed to one or two days.<sup>5</sup>

Also on September 1, 1939 Hitler instituted a new  
decoration, the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross for continuous acts  
of exceptional bravery or in the case of higher ranks for successful  
execution of battle or for formulating outstanding battle plans.<sup>6</sup>  
Recommendation for the Knight's Cross required the endorsement of  
the chain of command through army commander with the final decision  
made by Hitler.<sup>7</sup> Prerequisites included previous award of both  
classes of the Iron Cross. Enlisted personnel as well as officers  
were eligible for this award. Some 7,300 Knight's Crosses were  
awarded.<sup>8</sup>

For commanding officers however, bravery alone was not  
justification for recommendation for the Knight's Cross. In addition  
the officer had to demonstrate several instances of exercising  
independent decisions. This is best amplified by comments by Field  
Marshall Schoener concerning a recommendation for the award to a  
colonel. Schoerner wrote that for a regimental commander to lead a  
counterattack personally with machine-guns and hand grenades was not  
exceptional bravery but a "self evident duty".<sup>9</sup>

On June 3, 1940 Hitler instituted the next higher grade the of Knight's Cross, the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross with Oakleaves. This award was intended to further recognize those individuals, already winners of the Knight's Cross, for continued accomplishments of bravery and initiative. Enlisted personnel, officers, and foreign military personnel were eligible to receive the Oakleaves and by war's end 882 had.<sup>10</sup>

One year later on June 21, 1941 Hitler again introduced another higher grade of award the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross with Oakleaves and Swords. This grade was designed to continue to reward those previous recipients of the Oakleaves who accomplished further feats of military achievement. Although all German military personnel were eligible to receive this award, only 159 officers actually did.<sup>11</sup>

On July 15, 1941 Hitler introduced what was believed to be the final upgrade, the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross with Oakleaves, Swords, and Diamonds. Again it was intended to reward further achievement and by the end of the war had only been awarded 27 times.<sup>12</sup>

By December 29, 1944 Hitler decided that one ultimate award be created for Germany's twelve bravest soldiers, the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross with Golden Oakleaves, Swords, and Diamonds.

Three days later the first of these decorations was bestowed on Luftwaffe Stuka pilot Colonel Hans Rudel. No other presentations were made.<sup>13</sup>

Each of the grades of the Knight's Cross except the last was won by Army personnel and are shown below:

Table 25  
Army Recipients of the Knight's Cross

	Number	Percentage of Total
Knight's Cross	5070	69
Oakleaves	486	55
Swords	75	47
Diamonds	11	41

Corps commanders figured prominently as recipients of all of these awards as Hitler used the higher classes of Knight's Cross as an effective motivational tool.<sup>14</sup> The following is a presentation of

those corps commanders as a function of their highest award received and the percentage of all corps commanders receiving each grade:

Table 26

Highest Decorations Received by the Corps Commanders

	Number	Percentage of Total
Knight's Cross	133	40.1
Oakleaves	102	30.7
Swords	35	10.5
Diamonds	7	2.1

Many of the corps commanders received these awards for previous service as regimental and division commanders. In reviewing actual corps command, we find that none received the Diamonds for

corps command. Individuals who received the Knight's Cross with Oakleaves and Swords for achievement as corps commanders were: <sup>15</sup>

Table 27

Knight's Cross with Oakleaves and Swords for Corps Command

Grade	Name	Decoration	Corps	Date
GL	Hube	Swords	XIV Panzer	21.12.42
GdPz	Harpe	Swords	XXXXI Panzer	15.9.43
GdPz	Breith	Swords	III Panzer	21.2.44
GdGebTr	Kreysing	Swords	XVII	13.4.44
GdI	Jordan	Swords	VI	20.4.44
GdI	Wegener	Swords	L	17.9.44
GdPz	v. Knobelsdorff	Swords	XXXX Panzer	21.9.44
GdI	Recknagel	Swords	XXXXII	23.10.44
GdI	v. Obstfelder	Swords	LXXXVI	5.11.44
GdA	Weidling	Swords	XXXXI Panzer	28.11.44
GdPz	Herr	Swords	LXXVI Panzer	18.12.44

It is interesting to note that of these eleven commanders, six received the award as commanders of panzer corps. Forty-five received the Knight's Cross with Oakleaves for service as corps commanders. Fifteen of these men were commanders of panzer corps. Finally, a further forty five individuals earned the Knight's Cross.



Only five of these men were panzer corps commanders. This distribution reveals two items. First, recognition for achievement in panzer corps came quicker than that in other types. Second, by the time most individuals reached corps command they had already been awarded the Knight's Cross for previous subordinate command level achievement, although this was certainly not a prerequisite.

The importance of the bestowal of the grades of the Knight's Cross can not be over estimated. Rudolf Hofmann, a former department chief in the Army Personnel Office, in his description of the officer promotion system stated that Knight's Cross winners<sup>16</sup> "automatically" were given more generous, preferential promotions. Recipients received favorable publicity including tours among civilian industry, postcards in their honor and free gifts. Interviews with several radiomen in the 12th SS Panzer Regiment aptly sum up the prestige associated with the award. They stated that after a particularly difficult tank assault the following radio message was transmitted by the battalion commander: "Tanks halt! That should get us the Knight's Cross!"<sup>17</sup> (It did).

Although many corps commanders received the Knight's Cross, others were awarded the German Cross in Gold. Hitler instituted this award in September 1941 for repeated acts of valor or outstanding service not justifying the higher Knight's Cross. The recipient had

to have the Iron Cross 1st Class, but the German Cross was not in the cumulative line as previously described. During the period 1941-1945 Army personnel received 16,876 German Crosses. Twenty corps commanders had this award as their highest decoration.<sup>18</sup>

## PROMOTIONS

The basis for officer promotions in the German Army was the officer efficiency reporting system. This program had a time honored tradition, initially established in the Prussian Army by King Frederick Wilhelm I in 1725.<sup>19</sup> Prior to World War II the system called for an annual report for each officer. Based on these reports seven categories were established into which an officer could be classified. The highest two classifications were: (1) Officers suitable for service at the High Command, and (2) Officers suitable for General Staff duty.<sup>20</sup>

General officers were arranged on lists submitted every three months to the Army Personnel Office. The top three categories were: (1) "Born Leaders", (2) Officers who would perform well in the next higher command, and (3) Officers who should be placed temporarily in the next higher command to prove their abilities.<sup>21</sup> The efficiency report provided the most important information in determining appointments and promotions.<sup>22</sup>

The narrative comments on the report furnished valuable insights into the potential of each officer. A promotion list prepared in February 1945 on several officers reflects these observations.<sup>23</sup>

GdGebTr Jodl - "Bright with a strong willed personality, prominent tactical ability."

GdPz Roettiger - "Suitable as a commanding general (corps), later an army commander."

GdK Westphal - "Towering personal leader. Great achiever."

GL von Gyldenfeldt - ""Tactical and operational talent. Clear judgement, sure decisions."

GL Foertsch - "Outstanding tactical and operational vision... steady in a crisis."

GL Melzer - "Personally valiant... good tactical vision. steady in a crisis. Good improviser."

As reflected by the comments, these individuals represented the best in the promotion system and a high level of competency.

Until 1942 the promotion system was oriented on seniority. However after this time, under pressure from Hitler and growing officer losses, the system reoriented from seniority to frontline service. In practical terms this meant that General Staff officers, for example, could not qualify for promotion without doing a frontline tour.<sup>24</sup> With this in mind Kurt Zeitzler, former Chief of Staff of the Army, stated after the war that promotions were handed out too quickly and lavishly during the war.<sup>25</sup> The following table<sup>26</sup> shows this expansion of general officer grades from 1938 to 1944:

Table 28  
General Officers in Service

Grade	October 1938	May 1942	May 1943	May 1944
Generalfeldmarschall	0	8	15	16
Generaloberst	3	19	18	26
General der Infanterie,	31	99	141	170
etc.				
Generalleutnant	87	223	369	473
Generalmajor	154	465	501	565
Total	275	814	1044	1250

Eleven corps commanders were promoted to generalfeldmarschall. They are shown in the table below:

Table 29

Corps Commanders Promoted to Generalfeldmarschall

Grade	Name	Corps	Corps Commander		Date Promoted to GFM
			from	to	
GdA	von Brauchitsch	I	1.10.35	1.4.37	19.7.40
GdI	Busch	VIII	4.2.38	24.10.39	1.2.43
GdK	von Kleist	VIII	1.5.35	4.2.38	1.2.43
		XXII	8.39	11.40	
GdA	von Kluge	VI	1.4.35	1.12.38	19.7.40
GdA	von Kuechler	I	1.4.37	8.39	30.6.42
GdI	von Manstein	XXXVIII	1.2.40	15.3.41	1.7.42
		LVI	2.41	12.9.41	
GdPz	Model	XXXXI Pz	1.10.41	15.1.42	1.3.44
GdA	von Reichenau	VII	1.10.35	4.2.38	19.7.40
GdGbT	Schoerner	XIX	15.1.42	1.10.43	5.4.45
		XXXX Pz	10.43	4.44	
GdK	von Weichs	XIII	1.10.37	20.10.39	1.2.43
GdI	von Witzleben	III	1.12.34	10.11.38	19.7.40

Several points become obvious when examining this data. First, eight of eleven (73%) of these men came from the nobility.

Branch representation was led by artillery with four of the commanders (36%) followed by infantry with three (27%). The average time span from leaving corps command to promotion to GFM was approximately twenty-seven months, with von Manstein the fastest riser at ten months and Busch and von Weichs the slowest at forty months each. Six (55%) were prewar corps commanders, while two (18%) were promoted out of this level within two months of the beginning of the war. Finally, the average corps command tour was twenty-one months, with Model serving the shortest time, less than four months.

The rank of generaloberst was the next senior grade in the general officer structure. Twenty-eight corps commanders attained this rank, with very different results from those reaching GFM. Only six (21%) came from the nobility. Branch representation was led this time by infantry with thirteen of the commanders (46%) followed by eight panzer (29%), three artillery (11%), three cavalry (11%), and one engineer (3.5%). The average time span from leaving corps command to promotion to GO was less than twelve months. Only two (7%) served entirely as prewar corps commanders. The average corps command tour was fourteen months, with GdPi Jaenecke serving the shortest time at only two and a half months in command of the IV Corps in the surrounded 6th Army at Stalingrad.

The great majority of corps commanders served at the General der Infanterie, etc., level and were not promoted higher. This was not a reflection of unsatisfactory performance but rather a result of the personnel needs of the Army. By May 1944 there were seven requirements for the rank of general der infanterie for every need for a generaloberst. Nine officers served as commanders at the generalleutnant grade and were promoted to the GdI level.<sup>28</sup>

#### HIGHER COMMAND

An even more important factor than promotion was selection for higher level command, army and army group. As mentioned before, general officers with the highest ratings could be categorized in efficiency reports as those who would perform well in higher commands or who should be placed temporarily in the next higher command to prove their abilities. As only twenty-seven armies existed during the war, and not all simultaneously, selection criteria was intense.

Eighty-two corps commanders were elevated to army command with twenty-two (27%) members of the nobility. Seventy-six (93%) had served as career officers through the Reichswehr period, five (6%) had transferred from the police, and two (1%) returned from earlier

retirement. Examining branch affiliation, thirty-five (43%) were from the infantry, twenty-one (26%) from the panzer, and thirteen (16%) from the artillery. Sixty-two (73%) were General Staff.

Concerning awards twenty-eight (34%) were Knight's Cross recipients, thirty-one (38%) Oakleaves, eighteen (22%) Swords, and five (6%) Diamonds. No army commander failed to receive one of the above awards.

In examining actual corps command factors, twenty-two of the army commanders had been panzer corps commanders, four were mountain corps commanders and sixty-three were infantry corps commanders. The average time of service as a corps commander was eighteen months before elevation to army command.

The highest field command in the German Army was the army group. Eighteen existed during the course of the war with selection to command being even more stringent than that at army level. Twenty-five corps commanders were ultimately elevated to army group command after successful army command. The remaining army group commanders were very senior officers who had started the war at army level or higher. Ten (40%) of all army group commanders were members of the nobility. Twenty-three (92%) had served completely through the Reichswehr period as career soldiers, one (4%) had transferred from Austrian Army, and only one (4%) returned from retirement. Concerning branch affiliation, eleven (44%) were from the infantry, six (24%) were panzer officers, four (16%) came from the artillery,



three (12%) from the cavalry, and one (4%) was a mountain troop officer. Nine (36%) of these individuals were General Staff officers.

In the field of awards, three (12%) were Knight's Cross recipients, ten (40%) Oakleaves, nine (36%) Swords, and three (12%) Diamonds. Six (24%) of the army group commanders had been panzer corps commanders, one (4%) a mountain corps commander and eighteen (72%) infantry corps commanders. The average time of service as a corps commander was twenty-one months.<sup>29</sup>

#### FINAL DISPOSITIONS OF THE CORPS COMMANDERS

In the previous segment many corps commanders were promoted to higher grades and command positions. This section will examine those individuals killed in action as corps commanders, taken prisoner during the war and joined the National Committee for a Free Germany, or who were retired or dismissed from command.

German losses during World War Two were staggering. A yearly breakdown of casualties by total dead and officer dead shown on the next page reveals the scope of this statement:

Table 30  
German Dead 1939 - 1944

Year	Total Dead	Officer Dead	Officer % of Total
1939-1940	73,829	4,357	5.9
1940-1941	138,301	7,831	5.6
1941-1942	445,036	16,960	3.8
1942-1943	418,276	16,484	3.9
1943-1944	534,112	20,696	3.9
1944-12.44	167,335	5,304	3.2
Total	1,776,889	71,614	4.0

Losses among general officers was also high. Bernhard von Claer, in his study "Generals of the Third Reich", stated that 342<sup>31</sup> general officers died during the war as shown.

Table 31  
General Officer Fatalities (By Grade)

Grade	Number Died
Generalfeldmarschall	7
Generaloberst	11
General der Infanterie, etc.	62
Generalleutnant	126
Generalmajor	136
Total	342

Table 32  
General Officer Fatalities (By Cause)

Fate	General Officers
Killed in Action	169
Missing in Action (Presumed Dead)	45
Accidental Death	25
Died of Natural Causes (On Duty)	46
Died of Natural Causes (After Discharge)	12
Suicide	25
Executed	20
Total	342

Corps commanders also suffered heavily. The following is a listing of all corps commanders killed while in command:

Table 33  
Corps Commander Fatalities

Grade	Name	Command	Date Killed	Location
GL	Baade	LXXXI	8.5.45	Segeberg
GdI	Block, J	LVI Pz	26.1.45	Lask
GL	von Bodenhausen	L	2.5.45(S)	Kurland

# Corps Commander Fatalities (continued)

Grade	Name	Command	Date Killed	Location
GdI	von Briesen,K	LII	20.11.41	Derijewka
GdPz	Decker	XXXIX Pz	21.4.45(S)	Braunschweig
GdI	Dostler	LXXIII	2.5.45	Italy
GdGbT	Eglseer	XVIII	23.6.44(A)	Salzburg
GL	Eibl	XXIV Pz	21.1.43	Dcn.
GdI	von Erdmannsdorff,W	XCI	8.5.45	Laibach
GdPz	Fehn,G	XV	5.6.45	Yugoslavia
GdI	Hauffe	XIII	22.7.44	Ukraine
GL	Jahr	XXIV Pz	20.1.43(S)	Storoshewoje
GL	Kaellner	XXIV Pz	18.4.45	Sokolnica
GdI	von Krosigk	XVI	16.3.45	Kurland
GdPz	von Langermann	XXIV Pz	3.10.42	Storoshewoje
GdA	Marcks,E	LXXXIV	12.6.44	Normandy
GdA	Martinek	XXXIX Pz	28.6.44	Beresinow
GdI	Mieth	IV Pz	2.9.44	Jassy
GdI	Priess	XXVII	21.10.44	East Prussia
GdI	Recknagel	XXXXII	23.1.45	Petrikau
GL	Schuenermann	XXXIX Pz	29.6.44	Pagost
GL	von Speck	XVIII	15.6.40	France
GdA	Stemmermann,W	XI	18.2.44	Tscherkassy
GdA	Wandel	XXIV Pz	14.1.43	Chilino
GdI	Wegener	L	24.9.44	Kurland
GdI	von Wickede	X	23.6.44(A)	Salzburg
GdPZ	Zorn	XXXXVI Pz	2.8.43	Krassnaja

This information provides several important conclusions. Twenty-seven corps commanders were killed while in command. Of these twenty-two (81%) were killed in action, three (11%) committed suicide (S), and two (7%) were killed in air accidents (A). Eleven individuals (41%) were killed while commanding panzer corps. As expected losses increased later in the war after the tide had turned against Germany. Only three commanders (11%) were killed during Germany's offensive years of 1939 to 1942, while four died (15%) in 1943, a year of transition, and twenty fell (74%) during the defensive fighting of 1944 and 1945. Examining locations for each fatality reveals that twenty-one (77%) were killed on the Eastern Front against the Soviets and three (11%) were killed on the Western / Italian Fronts against the Western Allies.

The National Committee for a Free Germany was formed in July 1943 from German emigrees and prisoners of war held in the Soviet Union. This group published a manifesto which called on the German people to overthrow Hitler, establish a non-Nazi government, stop the war, and relinquish all occupied territories.<sup>32</sup> Membership in the committee was open to all; however, the Soviets encouraged higher ranking officers to join to legitimize the movement. The High Command and Hitler naturally condemned the members as traitors. Reaction of junior military personnel seems to have been mixed, perhaps leaning against the committee also. It would seem that no

personnel as high ranking as corps commanders would have joined, but this is not the case. The following table lists those who did:

Table 34  
National Committee for a Free Germany

Grade	Name	Corps Command	Date Captured
GdI	Buschenhagen	LII	8.44
GdI	Gollwitzer	LIII	28.6.44
GdA	Hell	VII	8.44
GL	Hoffmeister	XXXXI	1.7.44
GL	von Luetzow	XXXV	5.7.44
GdI	Mueller, L	XXXXIV	21.8.44
GL	Mueller, V	XXII, XXVII	7.7.44
GL	Postel	XXX	8.44
GL	Schloemer	XIV	29.1.43
GdA	von Seydlitz-Kurzbach	LI	30.1.43
GdI	Strecker	XI, XVII	2.2.43
GdI	Voelckers	XXVII	9.7.44

In examining this information it is seen that twelve generals who had been corps commanders joined the Committee. Eleven (92%) were career officers; one (8%) had been in the police. Four commanders (33%) were General Staff officers and two (17%) were members of the nobility. In branch analysis nine (75%) were infantry, two (17%) artillery, and one (8%) engineer. No panzer or mountain generals joined.

Twenty corps commanders were dismissed from the service at the termination of command. Dismissed is a difficult word to define. Four were probably fired; GdA Behlendorff, GdPi Foerster, GL von Sponeck, and GdPz Stumme.<sup>33</sup> Sixteen others were perhaps more gracefully retired after corps command. When examining these sixteen it is seen that six (38%) were members of nobility and three (19%) were General Staff officers. Not many were recipients of higher awards, in fact eleven (69%) did not win even the German Cross in Gold. Eight were infantry officers, three were artillery, three were cavalry, one was an engineer, and one was a panzer officer.<sup>34</sup>

#### CHAPTER SUMMARY

In reviewing the factors of performance, promotion, and potential the corps commanders were well decorated soldiers, in a society that valued this characteristic. Two hundred seventy-seven commanders, (83.4%), received one of the grades of the Knight's Cross, Germany's highest military decoration. Concerning promotions, eleven corps commanders continued their careers to be promoted to Generalfeldmarschall which represents 3.3 percent of all corps commanders. Twenty-eight reached the rank of Generaloberst, most within twelve months of leaving a corps.

Eighty-two commanders later commanded armies and twenty-five went on to command army groups. In reviewing both promotions and later commands these commanders represented a higher percentage of nobility and General Staff officers than the overall general officer population.

Summarizing branch affiliation it would appear as though panzer and mountain commanders fared well concerning awards promotions, and later command in comparison to overall branch strength.

Twenty-seven corps commanders were killed while in command, most on the Eastern Front and most during the latter course of the war. Many commanders became prisoners of war with twelve joining the National Committee for a Free Germany. A further twenty were dismissed from service after their corps command.

In the final chapter a more detailed summary of all factors of command will be presented and the corps commanders on the Eastern, Western, and Italian Fronts will be measured against this standard.



## ENDNOTES

- 1 J.F.C. Fuller, Generalship Its Diseases and Their Cure: A Study of the Personal Factor in Command, (Harrisburg, Pa.: Military Service Publishing Co.), 1936, p.23.
- 2 Martin van Creveld, Fighting Power, German Military Performance, 1914-1945, (Potomac, Maryland: C&L Defense Consultants), 1980, p.124.
- 3 John R. Angolia, On the Field of Honor, A History of the Knight's Cross Bearers (Volume 1-2), (San Jose: R. James Bender), 1980, Vol 1, pp.14-22.
- 4 John R. Angolia, For Fuehrer and Fatherland; Military Awards of the Third Reich (Volume 1-2), (San Jose: R. James Bender), 1976, Vol 1, p.337 and 343.
- 5 Unpublished award documents to Unteroffizier Karl Binz, 25th Infantry Division, show the award of the Iron Cross 2nd Class on June 5, 1940 and the Iron Cross 1st Class the following day.
- 6 John R. Angolia, For Fuehrer, Vol 1, pp.356-357.
- 7 Martin van Creveld, Fighting Power, p.126.
- 8 John R. Angolia, On the Field, Vol 1, p.14.
- 9 Martin van Creveld, Fighting Power, p.126.
- 10 John R. Angolia, On the Field, Vol 2, pp.108 and 125. Leopold Steinbatz, a Luftwaffe Non-Commissioned Officer pilot, was posthumously awarded the Swords and promoted to lieutenant after being shot down by Soviet anti-aircraft fire near Woltshansk. He had amassed 99 kills before his death. This is the only instance of an NCO winning the award.
- 11 John R. Angolia, For Fuehrer, Vol 1, pp.366-367.
- 12 John R. Angolia, On the Field, Vol 1, p.52.
- 13 John R. Angolia, On the Field, Vol 1, pp.46-50. Rudel was a legend in World War II Germany for his incredible feats of dive bombing efficiency. By war's end he had destroyed 1 battleship, 1 cruiser, numerous smaller naval ships and more than 519 armored vehicles. He was wounded five times, one resulting in the loss of a leg.
- 14 John R. Angolia, For Fuehrer, Vol 1, p.336.

Erwin Lenfeld and Franz Thomas, Die Eichenlaubtraeger 1940-1945, (Wiener Neustadt, Oesterreich: Weilburg Verlag), 1982, pp.74, 78, 81, 85, 88, 129, 204, 273, 341, 344, 431.

GL Hube won the Knight's Cross as commander of the 16th Panzer Division August 1, 1941, and the Oakleaves as commander of the same unit January 16, 1942. He was awarded the Swords for his leadership of the XIV Panzer Corps in the Stalingrad pocket December 12, 1942, and the Diamonds as commander of the 1st Panzer Army during the breakout from the Kamenez-Podolsk pocket. On April 20, 1944 Hube received this last award at Berchtesgarden from Hitler and was killed in an aircraft accident the following day enroute to the front.

GdPz Harpe was awarded the Knight's Cross August 13, 1941 and the Oakleaves December 31, 1941 as commander of the 12th Panzer Division. He won the swords as commander of the XXXXI Panzer Corps for actions during the Kursk offensive September 15, 1943.

GdPz Breith won the Knight's Cross as commander of the 5th Panzer Brigade during the French Campaign in 1940. He assumed command of the 3rd Panzer Division and received the Oakleaves in this position January 31, 1942. He won the Swords as commander of the III Panzer Corps February 21, 1944 for defensive actions along the Dnjepr River.

GdGebTr Kreysing was awarded the Knight's Cross as commander of the 16th Infantry Regiment May 18, 1940 and the Oakleaves January 18, 1943 as the commander of the 3rd Mountain Division. He received the Swords on April 13, 1944 as commander of the XVII Corps also for actions along the Dnjepr River line.

GdI Jordan received the Knight's Cross June 5, 1940 as commander of the 49th Infantry Regiment and the Oakleaves June 16, 1942 in the same unit. After a tour as the 7th Infantry Division commander, he assumed command of the 6th Corps and received the Swords for military achievement in this unit April 20, 1944 as part of the 9th Army at Rshev.

GdI Wegener won the Knight's Cross October 27, 1941 and the Oakleaves January 18, 1942 as commander of the 94th Infantry Regiment. Promoted to command the 32nd Infantry Division later in the year, he assumed command of the L Corps and won the Swords September 17, 1944 for actions in Kurland with Army Group North. He was killed in action seven days later.

GdPz von Knobelsdorff earned the Knight's Cross as commander of the 19th Panzer Division September 17, 1941. On November 12, 1943 he won the Oakleaves as commander of the XXXXVIII Panzer Corps. For actions at Jassy Rumania he was awarded the Swords as commander of the XXXX Panzer Corps.

GdI Recknagel won the Knight's Cross as the 54th Infantry Regiment commander August 5, 1940. As commander of the 111th Infantry Division he won the Oakleaves November 6, 1943. He received the Swords October 23, 1944 as commander of the XXXXII Corps for defensive actions at Kowel with the 4th Panzer Army. Recknagel was killed in action near Lodz Poland January 18, 1945.

GdI von Obstfelder received all three grades of the Knight's Cross as a corps commander. As the XXIX Corps commander he won the Knight's Cross on July 27, 1941, and the Oakleaves June 7, 1943. On November 5, 1944 as commander of the LXXXVI Corps for actions in stabilizing the Western Front near Venlo in the Netherlands.

GdA Weidling was awarded the Knight's Cross as the 86th Infantry Division commander January 15, 1943. He received the Oakleaves and Swords as commander of the XXXXI Panzer Corps February 22 and November 28, 1944 respectively for actions in defense of Army Group Center during the massive Soviet Summer 1944 Offensive. He died in 1955 in a Soviet prisoner of war camp.

GdPz Herr won the Knight's Cross as commander of the 13th Motorized Brigade, October 2, 1941 and the Oakleaves while in command of the 13th Panzer Division August 9, 1942. He finally received the Swords as commander of the LXXVI Panzer Corps December 18, 1944 for the tenacious defense up the Italian peninsula with the 14th Army.

16 Rudolf Hofmann, "German Efficiency Report System", U.S. Army Historical Division Study MS# P-134, (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History), 1952, p. 46.

17 Jost W. Schneider, Their Honor was Loyalty! An Illustrated and Documentary History of the Knight's Cross Holders of the Waffen SS and Police 1940-1945, (San Jose, California: R. James Bender Publishing), 1977, p.167.

18 Horst Scheibert, Die Traeger des Deutschen Kreuzes in Gold (Band I, Das Heer), (Friedberg, FRG: Podzun-Pallas-Verlag), 1983, pp.11-15.

19 Rudolf Hofmann, "German Efficiency Report System", U.S. Army Historical Division Study MS# P-134, (Washington, D.C: Office of the Chief of Military History), 1952, p.3.

20 Martin van Creveld, Fighting Power, p. 166.

21 Helmut Kleinkamp, "The Army Personnel Office", U.S. Army Historical Division Study MS# P-041hh, (Washington, D.C: Office of the Chief of Military History), 1952, p.21.

22 Rudolf Hofmann, "German Efficiency Report System", p.36.

- 23 Oberkommando des Heeres, Heerespersonalamt, Amtsgruppe P3, Roll 48, Item H8/7, Series T-78, Records of Headquarters German Army High Command Microfilm, (Washington, D.C: The National Archives), 1961.
- 24 Martin van Creveld, Fighting Power, p.167.
- 25 Heinz Guderian and Kurt Zeitzler, "Comments on P-41a - P-041hh", U.S. Army Historical Division Study MS# P-04111, (Washington, D.C: Office of the Chief of Military History), 1953, p 34.
- 26 Wolf Keilig, Das Deutsche Heer 1939-1945 (Band I-III), (Bad Nauheim, FRG: Podzun-Verlag, 1956, Vol III, p.203.
- 27 The following corps commanders were promoted to the rank of generaloberst:

Table 35  
Generaloberst

Grade Name	Corps	Corps Commander from to	Date Promoted to GO
GdPz von Arnim,H	XXXIX Pz	11.11.41-30.11.42	3.12.42
GdI Blaskowitz	II	1935-1938	1.10.39
GdA Dollmann	IX	1.10.34-8.39	19.7.40
GdI von Falkenhorst	XXI	8.39-4.40	19.7.40
GdI Friessner	XXIII	20.1.43-7.12.43	1.7.44
GdPz Guderian	XVI	4.2.38-20.11.38	19.7.40
	XIX	1.9.39-11.40	
GdA Haase,C	III	19.11.38-13.11.40	19.7.40
GPz Harpe	XXXXI Pz	15.1.42-15.10.43	20.4.44
GdI Heinrici	VII	1.2.40-8.4.40	1.1.43
	XII	9.4.40-16.6.40	
	XXXXIII	18.6.40-20.1.42	
GdA Heitz	VIII	25.10.39-31.1.43	30.1.43
GdI Hilpert	LXIX	22.6.42-25.7.42	1.5.45
	XXIII	25.7.42-20.1.43	
	LIV	20.1.43-1.8.43	
	VI	19.8.43-11.43	
	I	10.11.43-1.2.44	
		30.3.44-1.9.44	
GdK Hoepner	XVI	24.11.38-2.41	19.7.40
GdI Hollidt	XVII	23.1.42-2.4.42	1.9.43
		12.6.42-7.12.42	
GdI Hoth	XV	10.11.38-11.40	19.7.40
GdPz Hube	XIV	15.9.42-17.1.43	20.4.44
		5.3.43-22.10.43	
GdPi Jaenecke	IV	1.11.42-16.1.43	30.1.44
GdK Lindemann,G	L	25.10.40-16.1.42	3.7.42
GdK von Mackensen	III Pz	15.1.41-31.3.42	6.7.43
		20.7.42-2.1.43	
GdPz Raus	XI	1.3.43-10.43	15.8.44
	XXXXVII Pz	5.11.43-25.11.43	
GdPz Reinhardt	XXXXI	15.2.40-30.9.41	1.1.42
GdI Rendulic	XXXV	1.11.42-4.43	1.4.44
GdI Ruoff	V	5.39-12.1.42	1.4.42

# Generoberst (continued)

Grade	Name	Corps	Corps Commander from to	Date Promoted to GO
GdI	von Salmuth	XXX	10.5.41-27.12.41	1.1.43
GdPz	Schmidt, R	XXXIX Pz	1.2.40-10.11.41	1.1.42
GdI	von Schobert	VII	4.2.38-25.10.40	19.7.40
GdI	Strecker	XVII	2.4.42-6.5.42	30.1.43
		XI	6.5.42-2.2.43	
GdPz	von Vietinghoff	XIX	1.39-8.39	1.9.43
		XIII	26.10.39-25.10.40	
		XXXXVI	1.11.40-10.6.42	
GdI	Weiss	XXVII	31.8.42-2.2.43	1.2.44

28

Each of the following commanders served his entire tour as a generalleutnant and was promoted after leaving corps command:

Table 36  
Generalleutnant

Grade	Name	Corps	Promoted To	Date Promoted
GL	von Choltitz	LXXXIV XXXXVIII Pz XVII	GdI	1.8.44
GL	Graeser	XXIV XXXXVIII Pz	GdPz	1.9.44
GL	Jahn	LXXXVIII	GdA	1.10.44
GL	Mayer	II	GdI	1.4.45
GL	Roettig	LXVI	GdI	1.8.43
GL	von Scheele	LII LIII	GdI	1.12.43
GL	Stapf	XXXXIV	GdI	1.10.42
GL	von Vormann	XXXXVII Pz	GdPz	27.6.44
GL	Ziegler	III Pz	GdA	1.1.44

29

The following corps commanders went on to command at the army group level:

Table 38  
Army Group Commanders

Grade	Name	Army Group	Dates Commanded
GdPz	von Arnim, H	Tunis	9.3.43-12.5.43
GdPz	Balck	G	9.44-12.44
GdI	Blaskowitz	G	12.44-1.45
		H	28.1.45-7.4.45
GdA	von Brauchitsch	4	1937-1939
GdI	Busch	Center	12.10.43-27.6.44
		Northwest	20.3.45-23.3.45

# Army Group Commanders (continued)

Grade	Name	Army Group	Dates Commanded
GdI	Friessner	North	1.7.44-25.7.44
		South Ukraine	25.7.44-22.12.44
GL	Harpe	A	28.9.44-16.1.45
GdI	Heinrici	Vistula	20.3.45-29.4.45
GdI	Hilpert	Kurland	24.3.45-30.4.45
GdK	von Kleist	A	10.9.42-9.3.43
		South Ukraine	9.3.43-31.3.44
GdA	von Kluge	Center	19.12.41-10.43
		D	2.7.44-17.8.44
		B	2.7.44-17.8.44
GdA	von Kuechler	North	17.1.42-9.1.44
GdK	Lindemann,G	North	31.3.44-1.7.44
GdI	von Manstein	Don / South	22.11.42-31.3.44
GdPz	Model	North	9.1.44-31.3.44
		North Ukraine	31.3.44-27.6.44
		Center	28.6.44-16.8.44
		B	17.8.44-21.4.45
GdA	von Reichenau	South	1.12.41-17.1.42
GdPz	Reinhardt,G	Center	16.8.44-25.1.45
GdI	Rendulic	Kurland	15.1.45-27.1.45
		North	27.1.45-10.3.45
		Kurland	10.3.45-24.3.45
		South	25.3.45-8.5.45
GdGbT	Schoerner	South	31.3.44-20.7.44
		North	25.7.44-18.1.45
		Center	18.1.45-30.4.45
GdI	Schulz,F	G	2.4.45-8.5.45
GdPz	von Vietinghoff	Kurland	29.1.45-10.3.45
		C	10.3.45-30.4.45
GdK	von Weichs	B	15.7.42-10.7.43
		F	26.8.43-25.3.45
GdI	Weiss	North	12.3.45-5.4.45
GdI	von Witzleben	D	26.10.40-15.3.42
GdI	Woehler	South	28.12.44-25.3.45

30 Martin van Creveld, Fighting Power, p.183.

31 Bernhard von Claer, "Generals of the Third Reich", U.S. Army Historical Division Study MS# B-513, (Washington,D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History), 1946, Annex 2.

32 Bodo Scheurig, Free Germany, The National Committee and the League of German Officers, (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press), 1969, p.43.

33 Dermot Bradley and Richard Schulze-Kossens, Taetigkeitsbericht des Chefs des Heerespersonalamtes General der Infanterie Rudolf Schmuntz: 1.10.42-29.10.44. (Osnabrueck, FRG: Biblio Verlag), 1984, pp.72,126.

34 Wolf Keilig, Die Generale des Heeres, (Friedberg, FRG: Podzun-Pallas-Verlag), 1983, pp.17,40,41,49,132,164,186,237,260,262,290,304,305,318,355,359.

## CHAPTER 6

### OVERALL CHARACTERISTICS

Taken together, the data relating to various characteristics selected in this study offer a revealing profile of German corps commanders. This summary will form the "baseline" for comparison of the commanders serving on the Eastern Front and those on the Western / Italian Fronts. Although there is no single benchmark characteristic on which to base degrees of command success, several in combination give new insight to the thesis question. Factors considered in this evaluation include the commander's career pattern (career service, recalled from retirement, transferred from police, etc.), branch affiliation, General Staff service, previous command and staff assignments, decorations, and later promotion to higher rank and higher command.<sup>1</sup>

The commander's background is a significant factor of command success. Career commanders (individuals with uninterrupted service in the army from WWI to WWII) composed 80.7% of the total in command, while those incorporated from the Austrian Army after the Anschluss, 3.3% of the total, should also fall into this category. According to Blumentritt's assertion, therefore, 84% of all corps commanders would possess the most current professional competence, versus the 16% who transferred from the police or returned from retirement.



A review of branch affiliation reveals that three major branches held the lion's share of corps command positions: infantry with 51.5%, artillery with 18.9%, and panzer with 16.2%. Available data indicates that panzer generals overall may have fared better in awards and promotions, but it is outside the scope of this thesis to examine this point fully. Additionally, it would be incorrect to state that panzer officers were more proficient than other branch officers. However, the relationship between these three percentages on each front is significant in examining the application of traditional tactics of the infantry, mobility tactics of the panzer, and firepower application of the artillery.

General Staff service was viewed highly by senior military leadership who made the selections of corps commanders. Although Hitler disliked the General Staff and implemented several policies to limit its importance, this study has found no evidence that he became deliberately involved in selection of commanders at corps level. Further research must be done as sources indicating General Staff officers are not complete and complete figures may be ultimately higher than the 50% found belonging to this group. Numerous examples of successful command at this and higher levels by non-General Staff officers exist. However, with the German High Command's own special selection, training, and education processes, it is evident that General Staff service was considered a mark of success. Therefore it also will be considered in the final comparison.

Previous command and staff experience are additional factors that will be considered for comparison. Almost 90% of all corps commanders had commanded at the division level, with 15.3% previous panzer division commanders. Concerning prior staff service, 9% had served as division operations officers, 20% as corps chiefs of staff, and 11% army chiefs of staff. These three staff positions are closely related to General Staff service as during both the Reichswehr, albeit secretly, and the Wehrmacht they were coded for General Staff officers.

Overall the corps commanders were highly decorated with various military decorations of their nation. Considering the emphasis that all segments of government and society placed on these decorations it would appear that they were indicative at that time of military success. Individual examples of commanders not receiving a specific award due to conflicts with Hitler exist but do not disprove overall results. Combining all grades of the Knight's Cross, 83.4% of all corps commanders were winners of this award. Concerning the bestowal of awards for achievement as corps commanders, 3.3% received the Knight's Cross with Oakleaves and Swords, while 13.6% received the Knight's Cross with Oakleaves.

Later promotion to higher rank and higher command is a significant indicator all armies use to reward success and indicate potential. The German Army was no different with respect to corps command. Eleven former corps commanders (3.3%) attained the rank of Generalfeldmarschall while twenty-eight former commanders (8.4%) achieved the rank of Generaloberst. Above the corps level were the armies and army groups. Eighty-five corps commanders (25.6%) were elevated to army command while twenty-five (7.5%) ultimately assumed army group command. Selection for either was a significant indicator of past success and are crucial to the thesis.

The results that will be used for the analysis can also be displayed in table format to facilitate comparison:

Table 38  
Corps Commander Baseline Characteristics

Category	Percentage
Career Officer	84
Branch Affiliation:	
Infantry	51.5
Artillery	18.9
Panzer	16.2

# Corps Commander Baseline Characteristics (continued)

Category	Percentage
General Staff Membership	49.7
Previous Division Command	
Infantry	77.4
Panzer	15.3
Infantry and Panzer	3.3
Previous Staff Experience	
Division Operations Officer	9.0
Corps Chiefs of Staff	19.8
Army Chiefs of Staff	11.4
Award Recipients	
All Grades of Knight's Cross	83.4
Swords as Commander	3.3
Oakleaves as Commander	13.6
Later Promotion	
To Generalfeldmarschall	3.3
To Generaloberst	8.4
Later Command	
To Army Commander	25.6
To Army Group Commander	7.5

Before inferences can be drawn based on the above data, one point must be addressed. There is some built-in inequity in the comparison due to the duration of the war on each front. The German military effort on the Eastern Front lasted from June 1941 to May 1945, a period of almost four years. The Italian Front lasted from July 1943, with the invasion of Sicily, to May 1945, some twenty-two months. The Western Front was in operation for an even shorter duration, from June 1944 to May 1945, only eleven months. Corps commanders on the Eastern Front had more time to be promoted as more higher commands became available in four years than in two. However, prior background factors still existed for all; and the awards system continued to the very end of the war.

With these factors in mind the following Front comparisons can be made:

Table 39  
Corps Commanders by Front Comparison

Category	Overall %	Eastern Front	Western Front	Italian Front
Career Officer	84.0	85.8	84.8	100
Branch Affiliation:				
Infantry	51.5	53.8	58.7	16.6
Artillery	18.9	15.6	21.7	25.0
Panzer	16.2	19.1	8.7	33.3

# Corps Commanders by Front Comparison (continued)

Category	Overall %	Eastern Front	Western Front	Italian Front
General Staff Membership	49.7	49.8	32.6	41.6
Prior Division Command				
Infantry	74.1	75.1	82.6	66.6
Panzer	12.3	12.0	8.7	16.6
Infantry & Panzer	3.3	4.4	2.2	16.6
Prior Staff Experience				
Division Ia	9.0	5.3	4.3	8.3
Corps Chief of Staff	19.8	23.1	17.3	25.0
Army Chief of Staff	11.4	13.3	10.9	8.3
Award Recipients				
Knight's Cross	83.4	93.3	80.4	91.7
Swords as Commander	3.3	4.0	4.3	8.3
Oakleaves as Commander	13.6	18.7	6.5	8.3
Later Promotion				
To GFM	3.3	1.3	0.0	0.0
To GO	8.4	8.9	0.0	0.0
Later Command				
Army Commander	25.6	27.6	8.7	8.3
Army Group Commander	7.5	8.4	2.2	8.3

It is evident, according to these criteria, that no front was "stacked" with more competent corps commanders to the disadvantage of the others. Career officer representation for the Eastern and Western Fronts closely paralleled the overall trend, with the Italian Front showing somewhat greater representation of this category. Corps commanders on static fronts, such as France from 1941 to before the Normandy invasion, were generally older, less decorated, and less likely to be promoted or be given army/army group command. Upwardly mobile corps commanders with more complete credentials were given command in active combat sectors, regardless of front.

Branch affiliation is also well represented by the three major branches on all three fronts. It is interesting to note, however, the relatively high proportion of panzer officers in Italy, where a more traditional, position-oriented campaign was fought, rather than a fluid battle that such a representation of panzer commanders might suggest. Panzer officers did receive a higher proportion of awards and promotions than a strict branch allocation would indicate. Twelve of eighteen panzer corps fought exclusively in Russia, one solely on the Western Front, one exclusively in Italy, and one only in Africa. The other three rotated between the Eastern and Western/Italian Fronts. With this ratio, it is obvious that many more panzer corps commanders served in Russia than on other fronts. The extremely low percentage (8.7%) of corps commanders of the panzer branch on the Western Front was partially offset by the presence of Waffen SS panzer corps and panzer commanders during the battles of Normandy and the Ardennes.

The two traditional branches, artillery and infantry, provided the highest overall percentage of commanders. The preponderance of panzer officers in the East apparently cut directly into the numbers of artillery commanders on this front. In reviewing army command, representation by branch was highest for infantry (43%), followed by panzer (26%), and artillery (16%). As more panzer commanders served on the Eastern Front, it is clear that these individuals would constitute much of the panzer representation for army commanders. The same is true for army group command where 44% were infantry, 24% panzer, and 16% artillery.

General Staff membership declined as the war progressed and is reflected in the reduced General Staff representation among corps commanders on the Western Front from 1944-1945. Again more work must be done in this area. The rank lists from 1920-1938, the primary sources for this criterion, are not complete as by the Versailles Treaty Germany was prohibited from having a General Staff. Many individuals could be identified as members of the General Staff by examining duty positions traditionally held by General Staff Corps officers, but no Reichswehr list would actually delineate membership. Other officers, who did not hold these traditional positions may have been General Staff officers also.

Most corps commanders on all three fronts had been division commanders. It is again interesting to note that a full third of the corps commanders in Italy had commanded panzer divisions, double the



percentage of those in Russia, and three times that of commanders on the Western front. Although many infantry and panzer division commanders later commanded corps, no reserve division commanders did. Thirty-five corps commanders did not command at division level. Most, however, commanded corps at the start of the war. Their opportunity for division command, therefore, would have been during the Reichswehr, when the German Army was extremely small. After 1940 almost all corps commanders had served as division commanders. At the other end of the spectrum, eleven corps commanders had commanded both infantry and panzer divisions. Some of these combinations occurred when infantry divisions converted to panzer status at the beginning of the war, although the division headquarters remained unchanged. Repeated division command could occur, but certainly was not a prerequisite for elevation to corps command.

The results concerning prior staff experience are well-balanced for all three fronts. The slightly higher results for army level chiefs of staff for the Eastern Front most accurately reflect the longer duration of this campaign. Again, commanders in Italy are well represented in Division Operations Officers and Corps Chiefs of Staff. These numbers are probably more accurate than overall General Staff representation as the Reichswehr rank lists included specific assignments for all officers.

Overall award recipients slightly favor those on the Eastern Front, especially in winning the Knight's Cross with Oakleaves as a corps commander. Part of this is due to the duration of the campaign, and also the offensive nature of this front from 1941 to 1943. The other two fronts, with some exceptions such as the 1944 Ardennes Offensive, were predominantly defensive in nature. In looking at any awards system discrepancies do exist. Undoubtedly, some general officers deserved to win one of the higher grades of award, but did not. Some may have received awards when their performance did not truly merit the award. There is scant evidence of dissatisfaction with the awards system. If widespread inequities existed, they surely would have been noted in postwar memoirs. Therefore, overall results are probably valid, keeping in mind that any such system is imperfect.

Promotion to both generaloberst and generalfeldmarschal can only be seen on the Eastern Front. Later command at army and army group level is not so one-sided, but still is clearly represented more by commanders in Russia. Again many of these promotions and assignments went to individuals who commanded at the corps level in 1941 and 1942. Late war commands do not appear to be by default. More than 2400 men reached general officer command. About 350 became fatalities. Assuming another 500 were too old or ill to take on the rigors of corps command, the German High Command still had well over 1000 eligible officers, from which to select. Qualified alternates

did exist. Temporary corps commanders were often selected from more readily available officers, but could be replaced by permanent commanders within a few days.

Ideally, immediate postwar interviews with High Command personnel officers on the relative merits of each commander would establish exact criteria for promotion. The USAREUR Historical Division undertook a wide ranging interview program, but did not include subject matter of this nature. Without such sources this thesis must turn to traditional military leadership theory to validate the criteria used for the study. The Reichswehr was highly competitive and demanding in the respect of officer advancement. The High Command leaders, above corps level, were products of this system. Despite the presence of several "political" generals in the Army Personnel Office, these leaders had great input to the selection of corps commanders. The most likely response would have been to select junior individuals "in their own image." That image included some representation by the nobility, an excellent educational background evidenced by selection for the General Staff, demonstrated excellence in staff and command assignments, the potential for higher service, and like-minded thinking.

To deviate sharply from these principals would have opened the possibility of an unfavorable change in the entire officer caste

system. To be sure, some radically different individuals, perhaps more closely aligned with prevailing political conditions, were elevated to corps command. But it was not in the best interest of all the higher military leadership for this to occur too often. As this thesis has shown, men of high quality were distributed throughout all major theaters of the war.

In summary, the corps commanders on the Eastern Front were not conspicuously more competent than those on the Western or Italian Fronts. The German High Command distributed talent well in all three areas, and continued to select quality individuals for this level of responsibility for the duration of the war. Using the evaluation system employed here, it does not appear that corps commanders gravitated to any specific front to get a "ticket punched". Quality individuals were selected to command in active combat fronts, where dedicated courageous leadership was needed.

## ENDNOTES

1

Concerning age, 49.5% of the commanders were between 51 and 55 and 31.8% between 45 and 50 upon assuming command. Only 1.8% were younger than 45 and 3.3% older than 60. Other aspects of relative command success cannot be directly related to age, so this criterion will not be used in comparing various front commanders.

Representation of the nobility remained constant throughout the war at approximately 22.6% of all corps commanders. This percentage dramatically increased to 73% of all corps commanders promoted to the rank of Generalfeldmarschall, the characteristic of nobility itself is not a valid benchmark of relative success and will also not be used in the comparison.

Nazi Party membership and influence will not be used for comparison. More concrete research must be done in this area to adequately document the extent of the relationship between Army leaders and the Nazi Party. This thesis however, will not use unsubstantiated post-war innuendo to categorize certain officers as Nazis.

Twenty-seven corps commanders (8.1%) were killed while in command. Twenty-two were killed in action, three were suicides, and two were killed in accidents. While this information shows that corps command was hazardous, it does not reveal any conclusion concerning proficiency of these individuals. Additionally, membership in the National Committee for a Free Germany was solely an Eastern Front phenomenon, with the question of resulting honor versus disloyalty left to other dissertations.

APPENDIX A - ABBREVIATIONS

## APPENDIX A

The following is a glossary of German terms and abbreviations used both in this manuscript and related German sources which will assist in further research. For terms that have more than one abbreviation I have used the first listed.

German term	Abbreviation	Equivalent
Armee	A / Arm	army
Armeekorps	AK	army corps
Armeeoberkommando	AOK	army command
Artilleriekommandeur	Arko	army level artillery commander
Auszeichnung	Az	decoration
Blutorden	BO	Blood Order of Nazi Party
Deutsches Kreuz in Gold	DK	German Cross in Gold
Division	Div/D	division
Eisernes Kreuz	EK	Iron Cross
Gebirgskorps	GebK	mountain corps
Geboren	geb	born
Gefallen	gef	fallen (killed)

General der Artillerie	GdA / Gen.d.Art.	General of Artillery (3 star rank)
General der Flieger	GdF / Gen.d.Fl.	General of Flying troops (Luftwaffe 3 star rank)
General der Gebirgstruppen	GdGebT/Gen.d.Geb.	General of Mountain troops (3 star rank)
General der Infanterie	GdI / Gen.d.Inf.	General of Infantry (3 star rank)
General der Kavallerie	GdK / Gen.d.Kav.	General of Cavalry (3 star rank)
General der Panzer	GdPz / Gen.d.Pz.	General of Panzer troops (3 star rank)
General der Pionier	GdPi / Gen.d.Pio.	General of Engineers (3 star rank)
Generalfeldmarschall	GFM / Feldm	Field Marshall (5 star rank)
Generalkommando z.b.V.	GenKdo z.b.V.	corps for special employment
Generalleutnant	GL / Genlt	Lieutenant-General (2 star rank)
Generalmajor	GM / Genmaj	Major-General (1 star rank)
Generaloberst	GO / Genobst	Colonel-General (4 star rank)
Generalstab	Genstbe / GSt	General Staff



Heer	H	the Army
Heeresgruppe	Hgr	army group
Hoehere Artilleriekommandeur	Harko	army level artillery commander
Hoeheres Kommando z.b.V.	HoehKdo z.b.V.	corps for special employment
Infanterie Division	I.D.	infantry division
Kavalleriekorps	Kav.Korps	cavalry corps
Kosaken-Kavalleriekorps	Kos.Kav.Korps	cossack cavalry corps
Krank	kr	sick, ill
Kriegsgefangenen	Kriegsgef	prisoner of war
Kriegslazarett	Kr.Laz.	frontline hospital
mit der Fuehrung beauftragt	m.d.F.b. / m.f.b..	charged with command (temporary cdr)
Oberkommando des Heeres	OKH	High Command of the Army
Oberkommando des Wehrmacht	OKW	High Command of the Armed Forces
Oberst	Ob / Obst	Colonel
Panzerkorps	PzK	armored corps
Reserve-Korps	RK	reserve corps
Ritterkreuz des Eisernes Kreuz	RK	Knight's Cross
Ritterkreuz des Eisernes Kreuz mit Eichenlaub	EL / Eich	Knight's Cross with Oakleaves

Ritterkreuz des Eisernes Kreuz mit Eichenlaub und Schwerten	SW / Schw	Knight's Cross with Oakleaves and Swords
Ritterkreuz des Eisernes Kreuz mit Eichenlaub, Schwerten und Brillanten	BR	Knight's Cross with Oakleaves, Swords, and Diamonds
Stellvertreter	Stllv	deputy
Verfugung	vf / vfg	at disposal
Verwundet	v / verw	wounded
Volks-Artillerie-Korps	VAK	Peoples Artillery Corps
Volksturm	Vst	Peoples forces
Waffen SS	SS	Waffen SS
Wehrmacht	Wehrm .	Armed Forces

APPENDIX B - COMMANDERS

## APPENDIX B

The following is a listing of all corps commanders. Two ranks are given when the general was promoted while in command.

### I ARMEEKORPS

GL-GdA von Brauchitsch	1.10.35-1.4.37
GdA von Kuechler	1.4.37-8.39
GL-GdA Petzel	8.39-26.10.39
GL-GdI von Both,H	26.10.39-1.4.43
GL-GdI Woehler	1.4.43-15.8.43
GL-GdI Grase	15.8.43-10.11.43
GdI Hilpert	10.11.43-1.2.44
GL Hartmann,W	1.2.44-30.3.44
GdI Hilpert	30.3.44-1.9.44
GL-GdI Busse	1.9.44-19.1.45
GL Mayer	19.1.45-21.2.45
GL-GdI Fangohr	21.2.45-25.4.45
GL Usinger	25.4.45-2.5.45

### II ARMEEKORPS

GL-GdI Blaskowitz	1935-1938
GdI Strauss,A	10.11.38-30.5.40

GdI Stuelpnagel,K	30.5.40-20.6.40
GL-GdI von Brockdorff-Ahlefeldt	20.6.40-5.42
GdI von Tippelskirch	5.42
GdI von Brockdorff-Ahlefeldt	5.42-28.11.42
GdI Laux	28.11.42-1.4.44
GL Mayer,J	1.4.44-5.5.44
GdI Laux	5.5.44-11.5.44
GL Mayer,J	11.5.44-14.6.44
GdI Laux	14.6.44-2.7.44
GL Mayer,J	2.7.44-14.7.44
GL-GdI Hasse,W	15.7.44-9.44
GL Roepke	9.44
GdI Hasse,W	9.44-15.1.45
GL Mayer,J	15.1.45-1.4.45
GL Gause	1.4.45-8.5.45

### III ARMEEKORPS (12.34-5.42) / III PANZERKORPS (6.42-5.45)

GL-GdI von Witzleben	1.12.34-10.11.38
GdA-GO Haase,C	19.11.38-13.11.40
GdI von Greiff	13.11.40-15.1.41
GdK von Mackensen	15.1.41-31.3.42
GdPz von Schweppenburg	31.3.42-19.7.42
GdK von Mackensen	20.7.42-22.11.42
GdSS Steiner	22.11.42-2.1.43

GdPz Breith	2.1.43-20.10.43
GL Ziegler	20.10.43-25.11.43
GL Schulz,F	27.11.43-9.1.44
GdPz Breith	9.1.44-31.5.44
GL von Saucken	1.6.44-29.6.44
GdPz Breith	29.6.44-5.5.45

IV ARMEEKORPS (10.35-9.44) / IV PANZERKORPS (10.44-11.44)

PANZERKORPS FELDHERNHALLE (11.44-1.45)

GdI List	1.10.35-4.2.38
GdI von Schwedler	4.2.33-18.10.42
GL-GdPi Jaenecke	1.11.42-16.1.43
GdA Pfeffer	17.1.43-31.1.43
(Corps destroyed at Stalingrad;reformed)	
GdI Mieth	1.3.43-2.9.44
(Corps destroyed Dnjestr;reformed)	
GdPz Kleemann	2.9.44-5.5.45

#### V ARMEEKORPS

GL-GdI Geyer	16.5.35-29.4.39
GdI Ruoff	29.4.39-12.1.42
GL-GdI Wetzell	12.1.42-1.7.43

GdI Allmendinger	1.7.43-4.5.44
GL Mueller,F	4.5.44-2.6.44
GL-GdI Beyer,F	2.6.44-19.7.44

(Corps destroyed Crimea;reformed)

GdA Waeger	26.1.45-5.45
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#### VI ARMEEKORPS

GL-GdA von Kluge	1.4.35-24.11.38
GdPi Foerster	24.11.38-12.41
GdI Bieler	12.41-31.10.42
GL-GdI Jordan	1.11.42-20.5.44
GdA Pfeiffer,G	20.5.44-26.6.44
GdA Weidling	26.6.44-1.7.44

(Corps destroyed Witebsk;reformed)

GL-GdI Grossmann	11.8.44-8.5.45
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#### VII ARMEEKORPS (10.35-8.44) / VII PANZERKORPS (12.44-5.45)

GL-GdA von Reichenau	1.10.35-4.2.38
GdI von Schobert	4.2.38-1.2.40
GL Heinrichi,G	1.2.40-8.4.40
GdI-GO von Schobert	9.4.40-25.10.40
GdA Fahrmbacher	25.10.40-8.1.42

GL-GdA Hell	8.1.42-5.10.43
GdI Dostler	5.10.43-30.11.43
GdA Hell	30.11.43-8.44

(Corps destroyed at Jassy;reformed)

GL-GdPz von Kessel	27.12.44-8.5.45
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#### VIII ARMEEKORPS

GL-GdK von Kleist	21.5.35-4.2.38
GdI Busch	4.2.38-24.10.39
GdA-GO Heitz	25.10.39-31.1.43

(Corps destroyed at Stalingrad;reformed)

GdI Hoehne	20.7.43-1.4.44
GL Block	1.4.44-14.4.44
GL Schlemmer	15.4.44-12.5.44
GdI Hoehne	12.5.44-4.8.44
GL Mueller,J	4.8.44-24.8.44
GdA Hartmann,W	24.8.44-20.3.45
GdI Wiese	20.3.45-19.4.45
GdA von Mellenthin	19.4.45-8.5.45



# IX ARMEEKORPS

GL-GdA Dollmann	1.10.34-8.39
GdI Geyer	8.39-31.12.41
GL-GdI Schmidt,H	1.1.42-15.10.43
GdI Cloessner	15.10.43-3.12.43
GL-GdA Wuthmann	3.12.43-20.4.45
GL Dr Hohn	20.4.45-8.5.45

# X ARMEEKORPS

GL-GdK Knochenhauer	16.5.35-28.6.39
GdA Ulex	8.39-15.10.39
GL-GdA Hansen,C	15.10.39-1.7.43
GdI Sponheimer	1.7.43-1.8.43
GdA Hansen,C	1.8.43-4.10.43
GL-GdI von Wickede	4.10.43-23.6.44
GdI Koechling	25.6.44-3.9.44
GL-GdI Foertsch,H	3.9.44-20.12.44
GL Mayer	20.12.44-27.12.44
GL-GdA Thomaschki	27.12.44-8.5.45

# XI ARMEEKORPS

GL-GdA Ulex	6.10.36-1.4.39
GdA Leeb,E	1.4.39-1.3.40
GL-GdI von Kortzfleisch	1.3.40-6.10.41
GdI Ott	6.10.41-10.12.41
GdI von Kortzfleisch	10.12.41-6.5.42
GdI Strecker	6.5.42-2.2.43
(Corps destroyed at Stalingrad;reformed)	
GdPz Raus	1.3.43-10.43
_____	10.43-5.12.43
GdA Stemmermann,W	5.12.43-18.2.44
(Corps destroyed at Tscherkassy;reformed)	
GdI von Buenau	20.3.44-16.3.45
GdA von Mellenthin	16.3.45-19.4.45
_____	19.4.45-8.5.45

# XII ARMEEKORPS

GdK Kress von Kressenstein	6.10.36-28.2.38
GdI Schroth	1.3.38-9.4.40
GdI Heinrichi,G	9.4.40-16.6.40
GdI Schroth	16.6.40-12.41
GL Heinemann	12.41-17.2.42

GL-GdI Graessner	18.2.42-15.2.43
GdI Tippelskirch	15.2.43-6.44
GL Mueller,V	6.44-7.7.44

(Corps destroyed at Mogilew)

### XIII ARMEEKORPS

GdK von Weichs	1.10.37-20.10.39
GL-GdPz von Vietinghoff	26.10.39-25.10.40
GdI Felber	25.10.40-13.1.42
GL Ottenbacher	14.1.42-21.4.42
GL-GdI Straube	21.4.42-20.2.43
GL-GdI Siebert	20.2.43-7.9.43
GL-GdI Hauffe	7.9.43-25.4.44
GL Block	25.4.44-5.6.44
GdI Hauffe	5.6.44-22.7.44

(Corps destroyed at Brody;reformed)

GdI Felber	6.12.44-12.2.45
GL von Oriola	12.2.45-1.4.45
GL Bork	1.4.45-15.4.45
GdI Hahm	15.4.45-18.4.45
GL Tolsdorff	18.4.45-20.4.45
GdA Lucht	20.4.45-8.5.45

XIV ARMEEKORPS (4.38-5.42) / XIV PANZERKORPS (6.42-5.45)

GdI von Wietersheim	1.4.38-14.9.42
GL-GdPz Hube	15.9.42-17.1.43
GL Schloemer	18.1.43-29.1.43
(Corps destroyed at Stalingrad;reformed)	
GdPz Hube	5.3.43-2.9.43
GL Balck	2.9.43-2.10.43
GdPz Hube	2.10.43-22.10.43
GL-GdPz von Senger und Etterlin	23.10.43-2.5.45

XV ARMEEKORPS (11.38-11.40) / XV GEBIRGSKORPS (8.43-5.45)

GdI Hoth	10.11.38-11.40
(Corps converted to Panzer Group 3 ;reformed)	
GdI Lueters	25.8.43-10.10.43
GdI von Leyser	1.11.43-1.8.44
GdPz Fehn	1.8.44-8.5.45

XVI ARMEEKORPS

GL-GdPz Guderian	4.2.38-20.11.38
GL-GO Hoepner	24.11.38-2.41
(Corps converted to Panzer Group 4;reformed)	

GdK Kleffel	4.7.44-20.10.44
GL von Mellenthin	20.10.44-20.11.44
GdI von Krosigk	20.11.44-7.4.45
GL Weber	7.4.45-8.5.45

#### XVII ARMEEKORPS

GdI Kienitz	1.4.38-23.1.42
GdI Hollidt	23.1.42-2.4.42
GdI Strecker	2.4.42-6.5.42
GdI Hollidt	6.5.42-7.12.42
GM-GL von Choltitz	7.12.42-5.3.43
GL-GdI Schneckenburger	5.3.43-7.9.43
GdPz Brandenberger	7.9.43-21.11.43
GdGbt Kreysing	21.11.43-27.4.44
GL Beyer, F	27.4.44-25.5.44
GdGbt Kreysing	25.4.44-28.12.44
GdPi Tiemann	28.12.44-8.5.45

#### XVIII ARMEEKORPS (4.38-11.40) / XVIII GEBIRGSKORPS (12.40-5.45)

GdI Beyer	1.4.38-5.6.40
GL von Speck	5.6.40-15.6.40

GL-GdI Boehme,F	15.6.40-10.12.43
GL-GdGbT Eglseer	10.12.43-23.6.44
GL-GdI Hochbaum	24.6.44-8.5.45

XIX ARMEEKORPS (1.39-11.40) / XIX GEBIRGSKORPS (1.42-5.45)

GL von Vietinghoff	1.39-8.39
GdPz Guderian	8.39-11.40
(Corps converted to Panzer Group 2;reformed)	
GL-GdGbT Schoerner	15.1.42-1.10.43
GL-GdGbT von Hengl	1.10.43-15.5.44
GL-GdGbt Jodl	15.5.44-5.45

XX ARMEEKORPS

GL-GdI Materna	1.10.40-10.9.42
GL-GdA von Roman	10.9.42-14.2.43
GdI Vierow	14.2.43-10.3.43
GdA von Roman	10.3.43-3.45
GdK Koehler	3.45-5.45

XXI ARMEEKORPS (8.39-4.40) / XXI GEBIRGSKORPS (8.43-5.45)

GL-GdI von Falkenhorst 8.39-4.40

(Corps converted to Group 21;reformed)

GdA Bader	25.8.43-10.10.43
GdPz Fehn,G	10.10.43-1.8.44
GdI Leyser	1.8.44-11.10.44
GL Baier	11.10.44-25.10.44
GdI Leyser	25.10.44-29.4.45
GL von Ludwiger	29.4.45-5.45

XXII ARMEEKORPS (8.39-11.40) / XXII GEBIRGSKORPS (2.43-5.45)

GdK von Kleist 8.39-11.40

(Corps converted to Panzer Group 1;reformed)

GdGbT Lanz 22.2.43-8.5.45

KOMMANDO DER GRENZTRUPPEN EIFEL (8.39-10.39)

XXIII ARMEEKORPS (10.39-5.45)

GdI Raschick 8.39-21.10.39

GdI Schubert 26.10.39-25.7.42

GL-GdI Hilpert	25.7.42-20.1.43
GL-GdI Friessner	20.1.43-7.12.43
GL von Funck	7.12.43-2.2.44
GL-GdPi Tiemann	2.2.44-12.10.44
GL-GdI Melzer	12.10.44-8.5.45

# KOMMANDO DER GRENZTRUPPEN SAARPFALZ (8.39-10.39)

XXIV ARMEEKORPS (10.39-6.42) / XXIV PANZERKORPS (6.42-5.45)

GdPi Kuntze	1.10.38-14.2.40
GL-GdPz Geyr von Schweppenburg	15.2.40-7.1.42
GL-GdPz von Langermann und Erlencamp	8.1.42-3.10.42
GdPz von Knobelsdorff	10.10.42-30.11.42
GL-GdA Wandel	1.12.42-14.1.43
GL Jahr	15.1.43-20.1.43
GdI Eibl	20.1.43-21.1.43
Oberst Heidkaemper	21.1.43-9.2.43
GdPz Nehring	10.2.43-27.6.44
GL Graeser	28.6.44-19.8.44
GdPz Nehring	20.8.44-19.3.45
GL Kaellner	20.3.45-18.4.45
GdA Hartmann	19.4.45-8.5.45



# KOMMANDO DER GRENZTRUPPEN OBERRHEIN (8.39-10.39)

## XXV ARMEEKORPS (10.39-5.45)

GL-GdI Waeger, A	8.39-6.11.39
GdI von Prager	6.11.39-1.5.42
GdA Fahrmbacher	1.5.42-12.6.44
GL von Choltitz	12.6.44-15.6.44
GdA Fahrmbacher	15.6.44-5.45

## KORPS WODRIG (8.39-10.39) / XXVI ARMEEKORPS (10.39-5.45)

GL-GdA Wodrig	8.39-1.10.42
GL-GdI von Leyser	1.10.42-1.7.43
GdPz Fehn, G	1.7.43-19.8.43
GdI Hilpert	19.8.43-11.43
GdI Grase	11.43-1.1.44
GL-GdI Grasser	1.1.44-3.7.44
GL-GdI Matzky	3.7.44-12.4.45
GL Chill	12.4.45-4.45
GdI Matzky	4.45-5.45

# XXVII ARMEEKORPS

GdI von Prager	8.39-6.11.39
GdI Waeger	6.11.39-23.12.41
GL von Gablenz	23.12.41-13.1.42
GL-GdI Witthoeft	13.1.42-31.8.42
GdI Weiss	31.8.42-4.2.43
GL Jaschke	4.2.43-1.3.43
GL Burdach	10.3.43-8.6.43
GL-GdI Voelckers	8.6.43-21.10.43
GL Mueller,V	21.10.43-26.10.43
GdI Voelckers	26.10.43-9.7.44
GL-GdI Priess	27.7.44-21.10.44
GL-GdA Felzmann	26.10.44-14.4.45
GdI Hoernlein	14.4.45-8.5.45

# XXVIII ARMEEKORPS

GL von Brockdorff-Ahlefeldt	1.6.40-20.6.40
GL Weyer	20.6.40-26.10.40
GdI Wiktorin	26.10.40-30.1.42
GdA Loch	30.1.42-25.5.43
GL Sponheimer	25.5.43-1.7.43
GdA Loch	1.7.43-28.3.44
GL Matzky	28.3.44-28.5.44
GdI Gollnick	28.5.44-5.45

# XXIX ARMEEKORPS

GdI von Obstfelder	1.6.40-21.5.43
GdPz Brandenberger	21.5.43-30.6.44
GL von Mauchenheim	2.7.44-9.44
GL-GdI Roepke	9.44-5.45

# XXX ARMEEKORPS

GL-GdA Hartmann,O	8.39-25.3.41
GL Ott	25.3.41-10.5.41
GdI von Salmuth	10.5.41-27.12.41
GL-GdA Fretter-Pico,M	27.12.41-18.7.44
GL Postel	18.7.44-8.44

(Corps destroyed Dnjestr;reformed)

GL von Tresckow	15.11.44-23.11.44
GL Neumann,FW	23.11.44-15.12.44
GdK Kleffel	15.12.44-20.3.45

GRENZSCHUTZ ABSCHNITTKOMMANDO 1 (8.39-9.39)

KORPS KAUPISCH (9.39-11.39)

HOEHERES KOMMANDO z.b.V. XXXI (11.39-6.42)

GdF-GdA Kaupisch	25.8.39-10.4.42
GdA Gallenkamp	10.4.42-6.42

(Corps converted to LXXX Armeekorps)

GRENZSCHUTZ ABSCHNITTKOMMANDO 2 (8.39-10.39)

HOEHERES KOMMANDO z.b.V. XXXII (10.39-5.42)

GL Buechs,F	26.8.39-10.1.40
GL Boehm-Tettelbach	10.1.40-1.3.40
GdK von Pogrell	1.3.40-1.4.42
GdPz Kuntzen	1.4.42-5.42

(Corps converted to LXXXI Armeekorps;reformed)

GL-GdI Schack	26.3.45-5.45
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GRENZSCHUTZ ABSCHNITTKOMMANDO 3 (8.39-10.39)

HOEHERES KOMMANDO z.b.V XXXIII (10.39-1.43)

XXXIII ARMEEKORPS (1.43-4.45)

GL-GdK Brandt,G	26.8.39-30.4.42
GdI Fischer von Weikersthal	1.5.42-15.6.42
GL-GdA Engelbrecht	15.6.42-24.12.43
GdI Wolff,L	25.12.43-8.44
GL-GdK Koehler,K	8.44-3.45
GM von Unger	3.45-15.4.45
GL Neumann	15.4.45-5.45

GRENZSCHUTZ ABSCHNITTKOMMANDO 12 (9.39)

HOEHERES KOMMANDO z.b.V XXXIV (10.39-12.41)

XXXIV ARMEEKORPS (9.44-5.45)

GL-GdI Metz	1.9.39-1.9.41
GL Schaal	1.9.41-12.9.41
GdI Metz	12.9.41-23.12.41

(Corps destroyed Jelez;reformed)

GdI Mueller,F	9.44-11.44
GL von Ludwiger	11.44-12.44
GdF Felmy	12.44-5.45

GRENZSCHUTZ ABSCHNITTKOMMANDO 13 (9.39)

HOEHERES KOMMANDO z.b.V XXXV (10.39-1.44)

XXXV ARMEEKORPS (1.44-7.44)

GL-GdI von Schenckendorff	10.39-15.3.41
GdK Koch-Erpach	15.3.41-15.5.41
GL-GdA Kaempfe	15.5.41-30.9.42

(Corps destroyed;reformed)

GL-GdI Rendulic	1.11.42-4.43
	4.43-5.8.43
GdI Wiese	5.8.43-1.44
GL Grossmann	1.44
GdI Wiese	1.44-29.6.44
GL von Luetzow	29.6.44-5.7.44

(Corps destroyed at Bobruisk)

GRENZSCHUTZ ABSCHNITTKOMMANDO 14 (9.39)

HOEHERES KOMMANDO z.b.V XXXVI (10.39-11.41)

XXXIV GEBIRGSARMEEKORPS (11.41-5.45)

GL von Gienanth	1.9.39-13.5.40
GL-GdI Feige	13.5.40-20.11.41
GdI Weisenberger	20.11.41-10.8.44
GL-GdGbt Vogel,E	10.8.44-5.45

GRENZSCHUTZ ABSCHNITTKOMMANDO 30 (9.39)

HOEHERES KOMMANDO z.b.V XXXVII (10.39-5.42)

GdI Raschick	20.10.39-1.3.40
GL-GdI Boehm-Tettelbach	1.3.40-27.5.42

(Corps converted to LXXXII Armeeekorps)

XXXVIII ARMEEKORPS (2.40-1.45) / XXXVIII PANZERKORPS (1.45-5.45)

GL-GdI von Manstein	1.2.40-15.3.41
GdI von Chappuis	15.3.41-29.3.42
GdI Haenicke	29.3.42-29.6.42
GL-GdA Herzog	30.6.42-9.1.45
GL von Mellenthin,H	9.1.45-15.3.45
GdA Herzog	15.3.45-8.5.45

XXXIX ARMEEKORPS (2.40-7.42) / XXXIX PANZERKORPS (7.42-5.45)

GL-GdPz Schmidt,R	1.2.40-10.11.41
GdPz von Arnim	11.11.41-30.11.42
GL Martinek	1.12.42-13.11.43
GL Puechler	14.11.43-18.4.44
GdA Martinek	19.4.44-28.6.44
GL Schuenermann	28.6.44-29.6.44
GL Mueller,V	29.6.44-8.7.44
GL-GdPz von Saucken	8.7.44-15.10.44
GL-GdPz Decker	16.10.44-21.4.45
GL Arndt	21.4.45-8.5.45

XXXX ARMEEKORPS (2.40-7.42) / XXXX PANZERKORPS (7.42-5.45)

GL Stumme	15.2.40-14.1.42
GL Zorn	15.1.42-15.2.42
GdPz Stumme	16.2.42-20.7.42
GdPz Geyr von Schweppenburg	20.7.42-30.9.42
GL-GdPz Fehn	1.10.42-14.11.42
GM Eberbach	15.11.42-24.11.42
GL-GdPz Henrici,S	25.11.42-30.9.43
GdGbT Schoerner	1.10.43-11.11.43
GdPz Balck	12.11.43-15.11.43

GdGbT Schoerner	16.11.43-31.1.44
GdPz von Knobelsdorff	1.2.44-2.9.44
GdPz Henrici,S	3.9.44-8.5.45

XXXXI ARMEEKORPS (2.40-7.42) / XXXXI PANZERKORPS (7.42-5.45)

GL-GdPz Reinhardt	15.2.40-30.9.41
GdPz Model	1.10.41-6.10.41
GL Ottenbacher	6.10.41-13.10.41
GL Kirchner	14.10.41-25.10.41
GdPz Model	26.10.41-14.1.42
GL Harpe	15.1.42-15.10.43
GL-GdA Weidling	16.10.43-1.2.44
GL Boege	1.2.44-10.3.44
GdA Weidling	10.3.44-19.6.44
GL Hoffmeister	19.6.44-1.7.44
(Corps destroyed at Bobruisk;reformed)	
GdA Weidling	2.7.44-10.4.45
GL von Wietersheim,W	10.4.45-19.4.45
GL Holste	20.4.45-8.5.45



# XXXXII ARMEEKORPS

GdPi Kuntze,W	15.2.40-24.10.41
GdI Bieler	24.10.41-11.41
GL von Sponeck,H	11.41-31.12.41
GdI Mattenklott	1.1.42-22.6.43
GL Dostler	22.6.43-4.43
GdI Mattenklott	4.43-3.44

(Corps destroyed at Tscherkassy;reformed)

GdI Mattenklott	3.44-15.6.44
GdI Recknagel	15.6.44-1.45

(Corps destroyed at Baranow)

# XXXXIII ARMEEKORPS

GL von Speck	1.5.40-31.5.40
GdI Heinrici	31.5.40-20.1.42
GM Berthold	20.1.42-24.1.42
GdI Brennecke	24.1.42-28.6.42
GdI von Kortzfleisch	28.6.42-15.8.42
GdI Brennecke	15.8.42-27.1.43
GL-GdI von Oven	27.1.43-25.3.44
GL-GdI Boege	25.3.44-5.9.44
GL-GdGbt Versock	5.9.44-14.4.45
GL Kullmer	14.4.45-8.5.45

XXXXIV ARMEEKORPS

GL-GdI Koch,F	1.5.40-10.12.41
GL Stapf	10.12.41-26.2.42
GdA de Angelis	26.2.42-30.11.43
GL Koechling	1.12.43-15.1.44
GL-GdI Mueller	15.1.44-21.8.44

(Corps destroyed at Kischinew)

HOEHERES KOMMANDO z.b.V XXXXV

GdI von Greiff	10.3.40-14.4.42
GdI Felber	14.4.42-21.5.42

(Corps converted to LXXXIII Armeekorps)

XXXXVI ARMEEKORPS (11.40-6.42) / XXXXVI PANZERKORPS (6.42-5.45)

GdPz von Vietinghoff	1.11.40-10.6.42
GdI Zorn	11.6.42-21.11.42
GM von Esebeck	22.11.42-20.6.43
GdI Zorn	21.6.43-2.8.43
GL-GdI Gollnick	5.8.43-22.3.44
GdI Schulz,F	22.3.44-20.7.44

GL von Luettwitz,S	21.7.44-28.8.44
GL Felzmann	29.8.44-20.9.44
GL-GdPz Fries	21.9.44-19.1.45
GL-GdI Gareis	21.1.45-3.5.45

XXXXVII ARMEEKORPS (11.40-6.42) / XXXXVII PANZERKORPS (6.42-5.45)

GdA-GdPz Lemelsen	25.11.40-14.10.43
GdPz Eberbach	15.10.43-22.10.43
GdPz Lemelsen	23.10.43-4.11.43
GdPz Raus	5.11.43-25.11.43
GL von Buenau	26.11.43-31.12.43
GL von Vormann	1.1.44-4.3.44
GdPz Funck	5.3.44-4.9.44
GL-GdPz von Luettwitz,H	5.9.44-8.5.45

XXXXVIII ARMEEKORPS (1.41-6.42) / XXXXVIII PANZERKORPS (6.42-5.45)

GL-GdPz Kempf,W	6.1.41-31.1.42
GL-GdPz Veiel	19.2.42-5.5.42
GdPz Kempf,W	5.5.42-31.10.42
GL Heim	1.11.42-19.11.42
GM Cramer	20.11.42-25.11.42

GM Eberbach	26.11.42-30.11.42
GdPz von Knobelsdorff	1.12.42-6.5.43
GL von Choltitz	7.5.43-30.8.43
GdPz von Knobelsdorff	31.8.43-30.9.43
GL von Choltitz	1.10.43-21.10.43
GdPz Eberbach	22.10.43-14.11.43
GdPz Balck	15.11.43-4.8.44
GdPz Nehring	5.8.44-19.8.44
GL-GdPz Graeser	20.8.44-20.9.44
GL-GdPz von Edelsheim	21.9.44-31.3.45
GL Hagemann	1.4.45-8.5.45

XXXXIX ARMEEKORPS (10.40-12.40) / XXXXIX GEBIRGSKORPS (12.40-5.45)

GdGbT Kuebler, L	25.10.40-19.12.41
GL-GdGbT Konrad	19.12.41-10.5.44
GdA Hartmann, W	10.5.44-26.7.44
GdI Beyer, F	26.7.44-5.8.44
GdGbT von Le Suire	5.8.44-8.5.45

# L ARMEEKORPS

GL-GdK Lindemann	25.10.40-16.1.42
GL Kleffel	20.1.42-10.3.42
GL-GdI von Boeckmann	10.3.42-20.7.42
GdK Kleffel	20.7.42-17.9.43
GL-GdI Wegener	17.9.43-24.9.44
GL Boeckh-Behrens	24.9.44-3.10.44
GL Mayer	3.10.44-25.10.44
GL-GdGbT Volckamer	25.10.44-11.4.45
GL von Bodenhausen	12.4.45-5.45

## LI ARMEEKORPS (11.40-1.43) / LI GEBIRGSKORPS (8.43-5.45)

GdI Reinhard	25.11.40-8.5.42
GL-GdA von Seydlitz-Kurzbach	8.5.42-30.1.43
(Corps destroyed at Stalingrad;reformed August 1943)	
GdGbT Feurstein	25.8.43-2.3.45
GL-GdA Hauck	2.3.45-5.45

## LII ARMEEKORPS

GdI von Briesen,K	25.11.40-20.11.41
GdI Ott	20.11.41-1.10.43

GL von Scheele	1.10.43-20.11.43
GL-GdI Buschenhagen	20.11.43-3.44

(Corps destroyed at Dnjestr)

#### LIII ARMEEKORPS

GdI Weisenberger	15.3.41-30.11.41
GdI Fischer von Weikersthal	30.11.41-22.3.42
GdI Cloessner	22.3.42-11.4.43
GL von Scheele	11.4.43-22.6.43
GL-GdI Gollwitzer	22.6.43-28.6.44

(Corps destroyed at Witebsk;reformed)

GdK von Rothkirch und Trach	3.11.44-10.3.45
GL Floerke	10.3.45-29.3.45
GL Bayerlein	29.3.45-5.45

#### LIV ARMEEKORPS

GdK Hansen,E	1.6.41-20.1.43
GdI Hilpert	20.1.43-1.8.43
GdI Sponheimer	1.8.43-3.44

(Corps converted to Armeeabteilung Narwa)

# LV ARMEEKORPS

GdI Vierow	6.1.41-14.2.43
GdA von Roman	14.2.43-3.3.43
GL-GdI Jaschke	3.3.43-17.10.43
GdI Herrlein	17.10.43-
GL Grossmann	-5.44
GdI Herrlein	5.44-5.2.45
GL Chill	5.2.45-12.4.45
GdI Matzky	12.4.45-5.45

## LVI ARMEEKORPS (2.41-6.42) / LVI PANZERKORPS (6.42-5.45)

GdI von Manstein	2.41-12.9.41
GL-GdPz Schaal	13.9.41-1.8.43
GL-GdI Hossbach	2.8.43-14.11.43
GL Grasser	15.11.43-9.12.43
GdI Hossbach	10.12.43-14.6.44
GdI Block	15.6.44-26.1.45

(Corps destroyed at Baranow;reformed)

GdK Koch-Erpach	16.2.45-10.4.45
GdA Weidling	11.4.45-2.5.45

LVII ARMEEKORPS (3.41-6.42) / LVII PANZERKORPS (6.42-5.45)

GL Kuntzen	15.3.41-14.11.41
GL Kirchner	15.11.41-12.1.42
GdPz Kuntzen	13.1.42-31.1.42
GdPz Kirchner	1.2.42-30.11.43
GdPz von Esebeck	1.12.43-19.2.44
GdPz Kirchner	20.2.44-24.5.44
GL Dr. Beyer	25.5.44-2.6.44
GdPz Kirchner	3.6.44-8.5.45

LVIII RESERVE-PANZERKORPS (8.43-7.44)

LVIII PANZERKORPS (7.44-4.45)

GdPz Geyr von Schweppenburg	5.8.43-30.11.43
GL von Esebeck, H	1.12.43-9.2.44
GL-GdPz Krueger, W	10.2.44-24.3.45
GL Botsch	25.3.45-17.4.45

(Corps destroyed in Ruhr pocket)

LIX ARMEEKORPS

GdI Schwandner	16.10.40-28.12.41
GL-GdI von der Chevallerie, K	28.12.41-22.6.42



GL Hilpert	22.6.42-25.7.42
GdI von der Chevallerie,K	25.7.42-17.1.43
GL Brandenberger	17.1.43-15.3.43
GdI von der Chevallerie,K	15.3.43-4.2.44
GL Schulz,F	8.2.44-22.3.44
GL-GdI Roehricht	22.3.44-2.6.44
GL Mueller,F	2.6.44-10.6.44
GdI Roehricht	10.6.44-29.1.45
GdGbT von Hengl	29.1.45-7.2.45
GL von Tresckow	7.2.45-10.4.45
GL Sieler	10.4.45-8.5.45

#### LX ARMEEKORPS

GL-GdK Koch-Erpach	1.11.40-1.3.41
GL-GdI von Viebahn	1.3.41-31.12.41
GdA Behlendorff	31.12.41-5.42

(Corps converted to LXXXIV Armeekorps)

#### LXI RESERVEKORPS

GdA Theissen	14.9.42-21.2.44
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(Corps destroyed at Wilna)

LXII RESERVEKORPS (9.42-8.44) / LXII ARMEEKORPS (8.42)

GdI Neuling 15.9.42-22.8.44

(Corps destroyed at Marseille)

LXIII ARMEEKORPS

GL Schack 24.11.44-13.12.44

GL-GdI Abraham 13.12.44-4.45

LXIV RESERVEKORPS (9.42-8.44) / LXIV ARMEEKORPS (8.44-4.45)

GdPi Sachs 20.9.42-29.7.44

GL Hoernlein 29.7.44-2.9.44

GL Lasch 2.9.44-25.10.44

GL-GdI Thumm 25.10.44-15.1.45

GL Hauck 15.1.45-24.1.45

GL-GdA Grimmeiss 24.1.45-4.45

GdA Roman 4.45-15.4.45

GL Friebe,H 15.4.45-5.45

LXV ARMEEKORPS

GdA Bader 5.5.41-14.3.42

(Corps disbanded;reformed)

GdA Heinemann 18.11.43-9.44

(Corps converted to Generalkommando z. b. V. XXX Armeekorps)

LXVI RESERVEKORPS (9.42-8.44) / LXVI ARMEEKORPS (8.44-4.45)

GL Marcks,E 21.9.42-12.11.42

GL-GdI Kniess 12.11.42-10.5.43

GL Roettig 21.5.43-6.43

. GdI Kniess 6.43-7.7.43

GdI Wetzell 7.7.43-20.12.43

GdA Lucht 20.12.43-3.4.45

GL Floerke 3.4.45-5.45

LXVII RESERVEKORPS (9.42-1.44) / LXVII ARMEEKORPS (1.44-4.45)

GdI Fischer von Weikersthal 25.9.42-7.6.44

GdI Sponheimer 7.6.44-16.12.44

GL Schwalbe 16.12.44-21.12.44

GL-GdI Hitzfeld 21.12.44-5.5.45

GENERALKOMMANDO z.b.V. LXVIII (5.43-9.43)

LXVIII ARMEEKORPS (9.43-5.45)

GdF Felmy	5.43-8.12.44
GdI Mueller,F	8.12.44-29.1.45
GdGbT Konrad	29.1.45-5.45

LXIX RESERVEKORPS (7.43-1.44) / LXIX ARMEEKORPS (1.44-5.45)

GdI Dehner	15.7.43-1.4.44
GL-GdGbT Ringel	1.4.44-24.6.44
GdI Auleb	24.6.44-8.5.45

HOEHERES KOMMANDO z.b.V. LXX (4.41-1.43)

LXX ARMEEKORPS (1.43-5.45)

GL-GdGbT Feurstein	16.4.41-22.6.43
GdA Tittel	22.6.43-5.45

HOEHERES KOMMANDO z.b.V. LXXI (3.42-1.43)

LXXI ARMEEKORPS (1.43-4.45)

GL-GdI von Nagy	15.3.42-1.11.42
GL-GdA Moser	1.11.42-15.12.44
GdA von Mauchenheim	15.12.44-5.45

LXXII ARMEEKORPS

GdI von Foerster	22.7.43-25.9.44
GM Zwade	25.9.44-10.44
GL Schmidt, A.	10.44-4.45
GL Schmidt-Hammer	4.45

GENERALKOMMANDO LXXIII ARMEEKORPS z.b.V.

GdI Dostler	9.44-5.45
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LXXIV ARMEEKORPS

GdI Straube	1.8.43-16.12.44
GdI Puechler	16.12.44-4.45

LXXV ARMEEKORPS

GdI Dostler	13.1.44-1.9.44
GL-GdGbT Schlemmer	1.9.44-5.45

LXXVI ARMEEKORPS (6.43-7.43) / LXXVI PANZERKORPS (7.43-5.45)

GL-GdPz Herr	1.7.43-28.2.44
GL von Choltitz	1.3.44-15.4.44
GdPz Herr	16.4.44-24.11.44
GdPz von Schwerin,G	24.11.44-25.4.45
GL von Graffen	26.4.45-2.5.45

LXXX ARMEEKORPS

GdA Gallenkamp	27.5.42-7.8.44
GdI Beyer	10.8.44-8.5.45

LXXXI ARMEEKORPS

GdPz Kuentzen	1.4.42-7.9.44
GL Schack	7.9.44-20.9.44

GdI Koechling	20.9.44-10.3.45
GL Baade	10.3.45-5.45

LXXXII ARMEEKORPS

GdI Boehm-Tettelbach	27.5.42-31.10.42
GL-GdI Dehner	1.11.42-10.7.43
GL-GdA Sinnhuber	10.7.43-7.9.44
GL-GdI Hoernlein	7.9.44-1.12.44
GdI Hahn	1.12.44-15.4.45
GdA Lucht	15.4.45-20.4.45
GL Tolsdorff	20.4.45-5.45

LXXXIII ARMEEKORPS

GdI Felber	21.5.42-15.8.43
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LXXXIV ARMEEKORPS

GdA Behlendorff	15.5.42-1.4.43
GL-GdI von Zangen	1.4.43-1.8.43

GdA Marcks	1.8.43-12.6.44
GdA Fahrmbacher	12.6.44-15.6.44
GL von Choltitz	15.6.44-30.7.44
GL Elfeldt	30.7.44-20.8.44

(Corps destroyed at Normandie)

#### LXXXV ARMEEKORPS

GdI Kniess	10.7.44-15.11.44
GL Schack	15.11.44-16.12.44
GdI Kniess	16.12.44-26.3.45
GdPz von Luettwitz	26.3.45-8.5.45

#### LXXXVI ARMEEKORPS

GdI Bieler	16.11.42-1.4.43
GdPi Jaenecke	1.4.43-3.6.43
GL von Mauchenheim	3.6.43-1.7.43
GdPz Fehn,G	1.7.43-25.8.43
GdI von Obstfelder	25.8.43-30.11.44
GdI Puechler	30.11.44-15.12.44
GdI Straube	15.12.44-5.45



LXXXVII ARMEEKORPS

GdA Marcks,E	12.11.42-1.8.43
GdI von Zangen	1.8.43-5.7.44
GL Jahn	5.7.44-9.44

(Corps converted to Armeeabteilung von Zangen)

LXXXVIII ARMEEKORPS

GdI Reinhard	1.7.42-21.12.44
GL-GdI Schwalbe	21.12.44-3.4.45
GM Wolpert	3.4.45-5.45

LXXXIX ARMEEKORPS

GdPz von Hubicki	25.10.42-11.6.43
GL-GdI von und zu Gilsa	11.6.43-1.12.44
GdI Hoehne	1.12.44-5.45

LXXXX ARMEEKORPS

GdPz Nehring	14.11.42-9.12.42
(Corps converted to 5th Panzer Army;reformed)	
GdF Petersen	10.44-5.45

LXXXXI ARMEEKORPS

GL-GdI von Erdmannsdorff,W

9.10.44-8.5.45

LXXXXVII ARMEEKORPS

GdGbT Kuebler,L

9.44-5.45

CI ARMEEKORPS

GdA Berlin

27.2.45-18.4.45

• GL Sixt

18.4.45-5.45

I KAVALLERIEKORPS

GdK Harteneck

10.6.44-5.45

15 KOSAKENKORPS

GL von Panrwitz

1.2.45-5.45

## PANZERKORPS GROSSDEUTSCHLAND

GdPz von Saucken	12.44-11.2.45
GdPz Jauer	12.2.45-8.5.45

## DEUTSCHES AFRIKA KORPS

GL-GdPz Rommel	19.2.41-15.8.41
GL-GdPz Cruewell	15.8.41-8.3.42
GL-GdPz Nehring	8.3.42-31.8.42
Oberst Bayerlein	31.8.42
GM von Vaerst	31.8.42-17.9.42
GL-GdPz von Thoma	17.9.42-4.11.42
Oberst Bayerlein	4.11.42-19.11.42
GdPz Fehn	19.11.42-16.1.43
GM von Liebenstein	16.1.43-17.2.43
GL Ziegler	17.2.43-5.3.43
GL-GdPz Cramer	5.3.43-12.5.43

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